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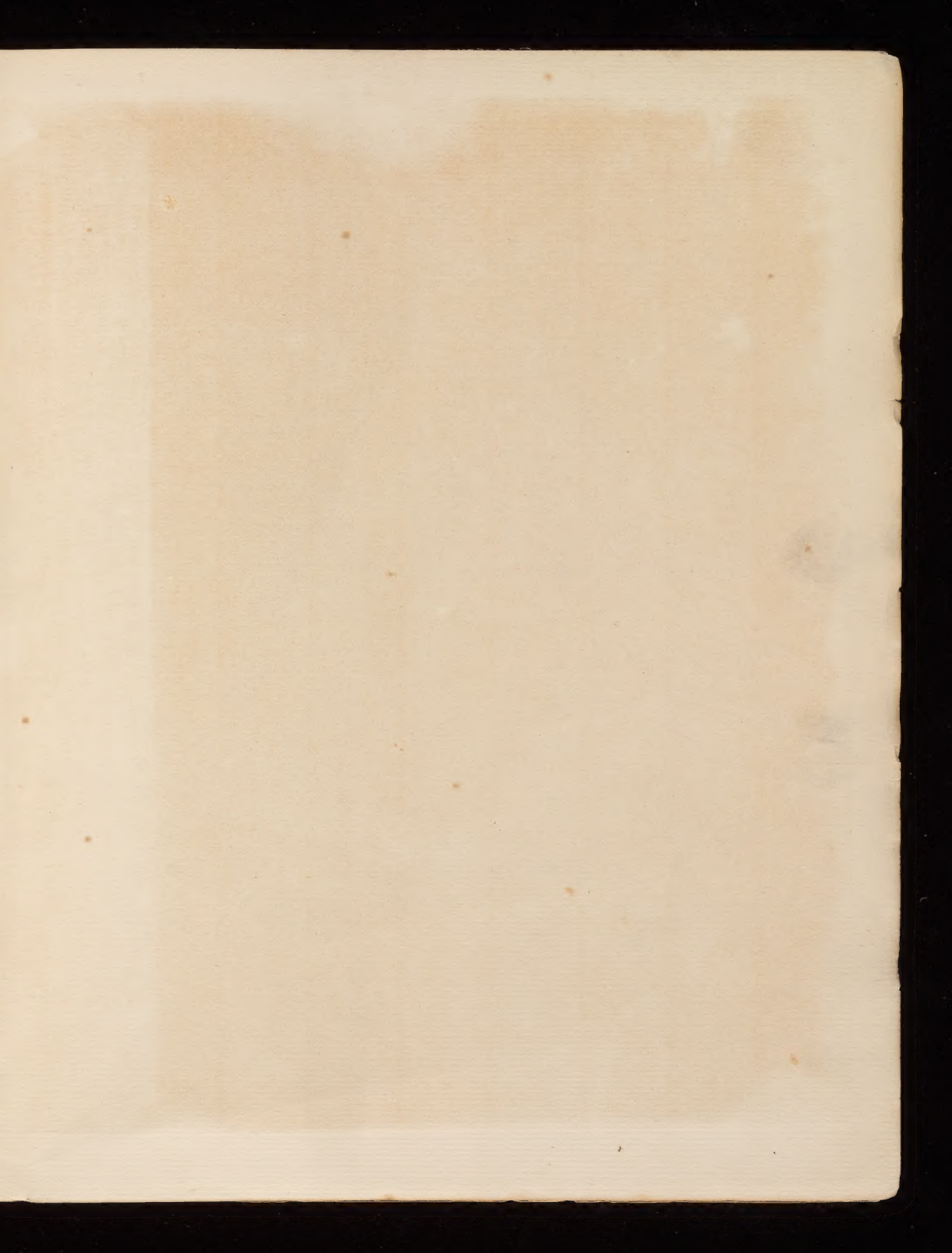
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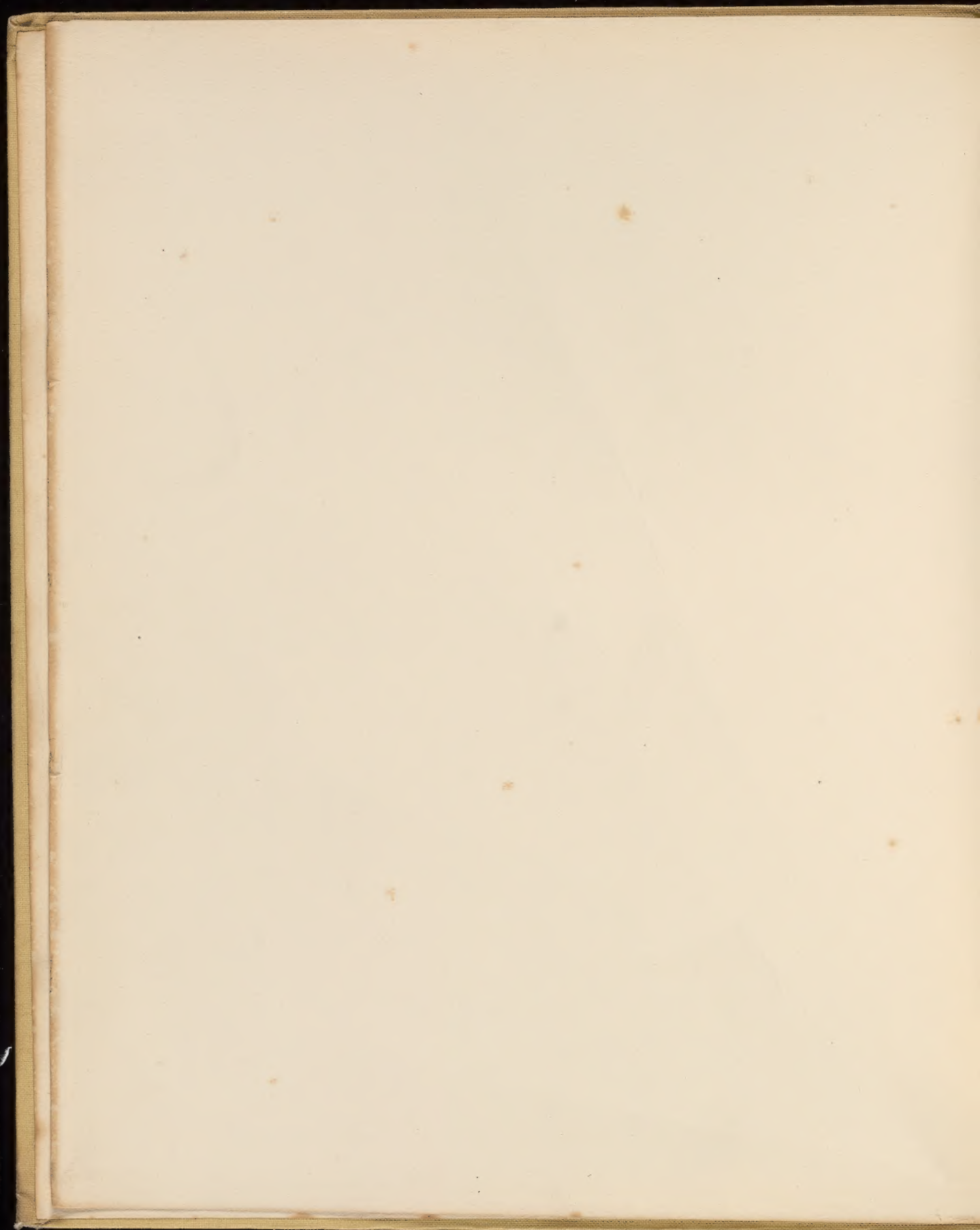
COLLECTOR



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JAMES ORROCK, R.I.

VOL. I



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COLLECTOR, in Two Volumes.*

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Walter C. Goodell, ph. sc.

James Orrock, R.I.



# JAMES ORROCK, R.I.

PAINTER, CONNOISSEUR,  
COLLECTOR

BY  
BYRON WEBBER

IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I.

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To

*Arthur Sanderson, Esq.*

LIBERAL AND APPRECIATIVE PATRON

OF

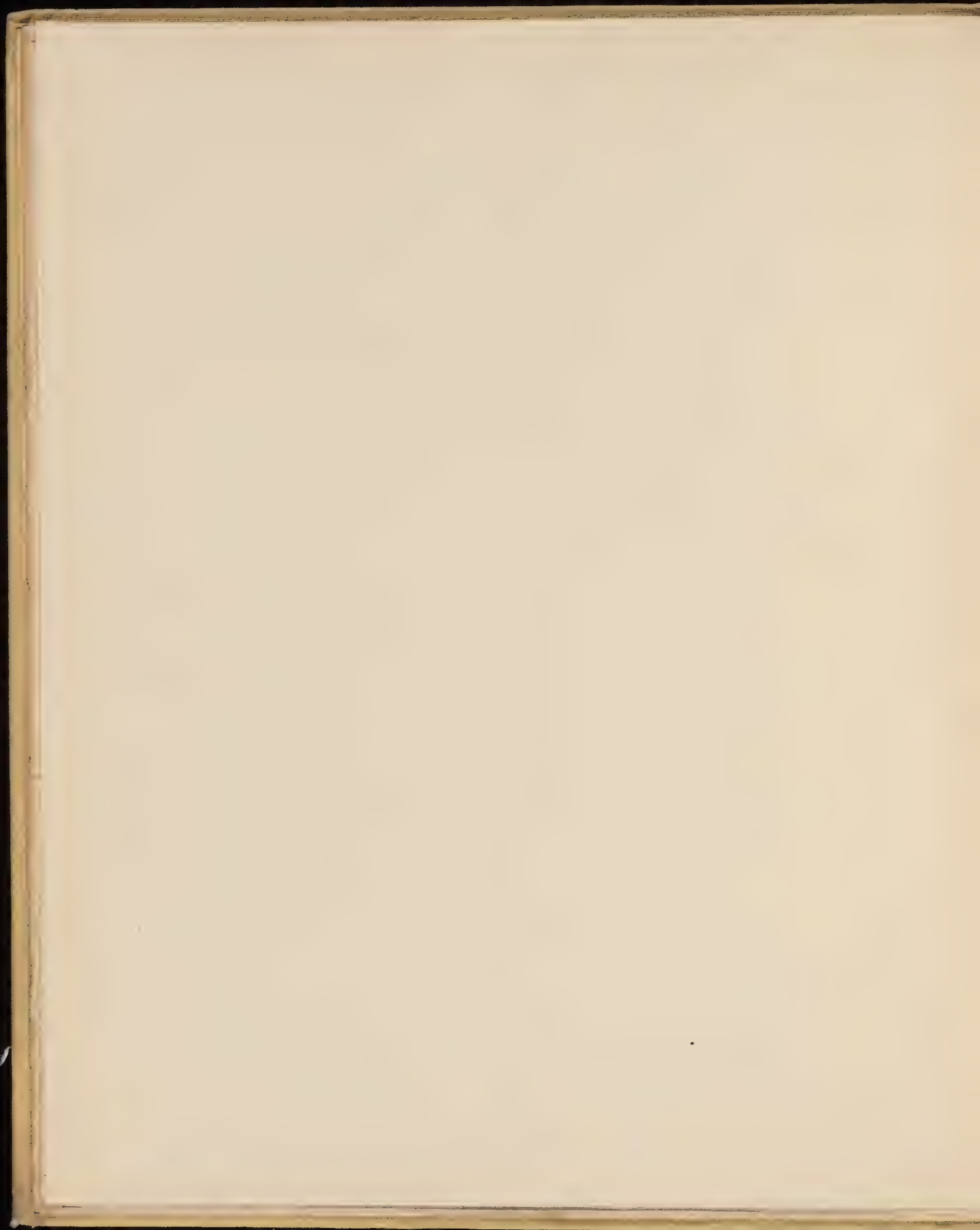
THE GREAT ENGLISH ART

IN EVERY DEPARTMENT

THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED

BY HIS SINCERE ADMIRERS

JAMES ORROCK AND BYRON WEBBER





## PREFACE

“AN Appreciation of the Life and Labours of Mr. James Orrock” might, with an aptness equal if not superior to that exhibited in the adopted title, have appeared on the first page of the present work. And such a description of the main purpose of the undertaking would no doubt gain in grasp if “cordial” were prefixed to the comprehending word. In making this declaration I cheerfully anticipate part of the verdict which I feel must inevitably be passed on my labours. A thorough appreciation—an appreciation warmed with enthusiasm, and kept steadfastly alert by a feeling of personal esteem and affection—is, I am convinced, essential to the biographer who endeavours to perform such an office as mine. With regard to a further point which might fairly be raised, I hold that there should be no more difficulty in honestly writing the life of one who is with us in the active pursuit of the objects of his adopted career than there is, or should be, in delivering a fortunate speech on the presentation of an honourably won testimonial to a Statesman, a Warrior, an Author, an Artist, or a Man of Affairs. Whether such an occurrence signalise partial or complete accomplishment is immaterial. Something has been attempted and something done, and while living the doer receives a modicum of his reward at the hands of his devotees. The limits prescribed to such a work as this are so distinctly defined and so commonly understood, particular attention need not be drawn to either their nature or extent. The speaker I have imagined delivers himself of his charge in the hearing of the hero of the hour; the writer of a book of the present scope accomplishes his task with the object of it looking over his shoulder. Certain restrictions are necessarily imposed on both speaker and writer.

## Preface

Mr. W. E. Henley entitles his masterly essay on Robert Burns "Life, Genius, Achievement." Borrowing the application, it may be observed that Mr. Orrock's Life has been one of unusual if tranquil interest, that he possesses (with his rare talents) what has been declared to be the indispensable quality of Genius, while his somewhat complex Achievement is important in the annals of Art. Several views of Mr. Orrock, and statements of his place in Art, have appeared in the periodicals of the day.<sup>1</sup> It has, however, been largely felt that a fuller and more researchful account of his endeavour and occupation was wanted. Be it candidly stated, without shirking a hair's-breadth from the personal responsibility attaching to the observation, that, prior to arrangements being made for putting together these pages, other admirers of Mr. Orrock sought the privilege of becoming his biographer. Abjuring the mechanical excuse of the proposer of a toast, or the maker of a complimentary speech, who sets out by disclaiming his ability to accomplish his allotted duty, and assures an invariably sceptical audience that he is persuaded that there are others who could have done it better, I claim for myself as biographer in this case the equipment of intimate knowledge of Mr. Orrock himself, and warm-hearted sympathy with his Mission as an exponent of the high place of England in the Art-world. Both knowledge and sympathy are upwards of a quarter of a century old. It is hoped that the author's determination to spare no trouble in worthily placing before a public interested in that mission his many-sided design, with Mr. Orrock as the central figure, will at least meet with due recognition. My duties were manifold. I had to fulfil the office of narrator, make "abstract and brief chronicles" of voluminous matter, a presentation of which could not be spared, and constitute myself editorial introducer of lecturer and essayist on, and keen and ardent controversialist in, the cause of the Great English Art.

It will be perceived, or I have failed in my endeavour, that

<sup>1</sup> Notably in the *Art Journal* and in *The World* ("Celebrities at Home").



## *Preface*

"an increasing purpose runs" through the account of Mr. Orrock's career. It is a varied representation, but it makes unfalteringly for one youthfully foreseen end. Beginning as a "'prentice han'" he had two strings to his bow, and he used them both in aiming at the same mark. He was educated for one profession, that of medicine, while from the beginning he was heart and soul in another. He studied and wrought at both with concurrent ardour, and when the time came for the predetermined surrender he devoted himself exclusively to the pursuit of Art.

It is related in Gilchrist's "Life of Etty" that, on the famous painter's bidding adieu to his native city, the provident mother had fain packed with his other necessities the printer's apron. He refused to encumber himself with that badge of a discarded servitude. He would follow his true calling, and that only, "if he got but threepence a day at it." Etty succeeded, but he had a weary weird to dree before he reached the goal of even threepence a day. Mr. Orrock's career, which in its earlier bifurcation bears some resemblance to Etty's, was more favourably circumstanced for pushing his bias towards Art. His allotted profession was at least congenial. Yet, while he never spared a moment to Art which his work in the medical schools rightly demanded, he passed from one study to the other with clockwork regularity, and made corresponding progress in each. "The summons"—to surrender the obnoxious calling and take up the chosen—"came," writes Gilchrist of Etty, "from those in whose hands the Painter's fate lay." With a force, a determination, a knowledge and command of resources which in a person of uncommon talents combine for the perfection of a certain type of genius, Mr. Orrock, during those Edinburgh days of callow youth and budding manhood, took his fate in both his hands and went forward to the predestined end. Ever a labourer at the limner's art, he has from a very early period of his career been a collector of the works of the masters in art, and in that capacity independently exercised, as well as by means of an insightful study of the

## *Preface*

achievements of the schools and studios of the Continent and Great Britain, he has qualified himself for the station which to-day he occupies as a ripe-minded Connoisseur. Fields tilled and untilled have alike been explored by Mr. Orrock. If not an actual discoverer in the latter, he has loomed largely as a revealer, a promoter, a hastener, and an enhancer of the popularity of painters who, but for his proclamations, had lived their lives comparatively unknown. And it is in no small measure due to Mr. Orrock, with others of the restricted brotherhood of discerners, that English painters whose works were accounted of little value during their lifetime have taken rightful rank with the masterpieces of the world. Heart and soul with Mr. Ruskin in what may perhaps, "with a critical deduction," be called the worship of Turner, and also in accord with the illustrious art-critic's soulful appreciation of other masters, Mr. Orrock's comprehension of the true fraternity may be submitted as being more catholic than Mr. Ruskin's, while he has had no occasion since he has spoken with voice and pen to either change his views or recant his opinions. And his survey of English Art has widened, while his convictions of its beauty have deepened "with the process of the suns." The essays and lectures written and spoken in London are the flower of the seeds sown in papers read by him at Leicester, Nottingham, and elsewhere years before. The essential features of both are preserved in the present volumes.

The allied arts in England, her native or Englished artificers, with their graceful and cunning craftsmanship in stone and metal, in glass and wood, have with true appreciation been included in the connoisseur's purview. Fine examples of the crafts he has discerningly collected. It is Mr. Orrock's pleasure to be surrounded by them and to live with them, not as one might, a mere spectator, in a museum, but as one does when they are his household gods, and to feel that, with the exception of the Eastern fabric underfoot, and the rare "Blue" that is bracketed



## *Preface*

on the walls or which is enshrined within cabinets that might have been originally made for its display, that every bit of it is English. And the casket containing these works of English Art, an "Adam" house, is just as fine, and just as English. It was not until Mr. Orrock's migration for permanent residence in the Metropolis that his captivation by the beautiful interiors designed by the Brothers Adam was perfected. Occupying, however, first part of one of those houses, in association with a brother artist, on the Bedford estate, and secondly, becoming the tenant of another, his present residence, 48 Bedford Square, he was brought into abiding contact with their chastely decorative beauty. He learnt to love the Adam house so much, that he could not measure his indignation when he heard that the hand of the modern spoiler or improver—the terms are akin—had been permitted to vulgarise them to their ruin. On one occasion he urged Mr. Ruskin to employ his pen on an exposition of the Adam art, with a view to not only making its beauty known to the honour and glory of England, but also to aid in its conservation. The plea was made during one of Mr. Ruskin's visits to 48 Bedford Square. After an inspection, which he never omitted, of the drawings by William Hunt, the Professor paused, and taking in the entire picture with its setting in a comprehensive glance, expressed his admiration of the harmonious design and colouring of the rooms. Mr. Orrock pointed out that the foundation of it all was the Adam architecture, with its marble and metal details, its decoration in plastic work, and in wood. He drew Mr. Ruskin's attention to the Flaxman mantelpiece in the dining-room, and the chaste delicacy of the original ceiling in the drawing-room above, the latter harmonising beautifully with the Pergolesi chandelier, which occupies its original place in the latter. Mr. Orrock descanted on the fact that Flaxman was the central figure of classic design in low-relief figures as well as in ornamentation during the Adam period, Wedgwood, working in conjunction with Flaxman, at the same time producing examples of the most beautiful ceramic art that

## *Preface*

England has ever known. Mr. Orrock reminded the Slade Professor that the world was for ever indebted to him for his writings on Gothic art in France, in Italy, and in England, and suggested that it would be an inestimable boon to the public, and a priceless advantage to the English Art, if he were to apply himself to the production of a work on the Art which they had been discussing. Mr. Ruskin replied that he had suffered from failing health, and was therefore reluctant to enter upon any new work, otherwise nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to carry out Mr. Orrock's suggestion. Mr. Orrock, on his part, promised his utmost assistance towards the accomplishment of the cherished design; but alas! nothing came of it.

In the pages that follow, Mr. Orrock in militant attitude and activity is uncompromisingly shown. He is a fighting man in a cause concerning the justice of which he has never felt the ghost of a doubt. He stands up to the enemy: he smites and spares not. At the same time, he is a combatant who can take as well as deliver a blow—the British test of a good fighter. They are not all of his nature whom he has met in the arena. But “He makes no friend who never made a foe.” In anything but a spirit of cheap or wanton antagonism has Mr. Orrock protested against the neglect of English Landscape Art at the National Gallery, demonstrated the Durability of Water-Colours, and complained of the careless custody of precious drawings at the British Museum and in the cellars at Trafalgar Square. In relation to another engagement, when the genuineness of a picture by Constable which Mr. Orrock lent to the Royal Academy was called into question, he said his say in the defence of the truth. The case, as far as it was discussed in print, was, by stress of circumstances, left unfinished. In re-opening it for completion there is no desire operating beyond that of establishing facts which bear on sound as contradistinguished from empirical or dilettante connoisseurship. There was so much heat, so much acerbity, so much virulence displayed in the conflict, it might have been better, perhaps,

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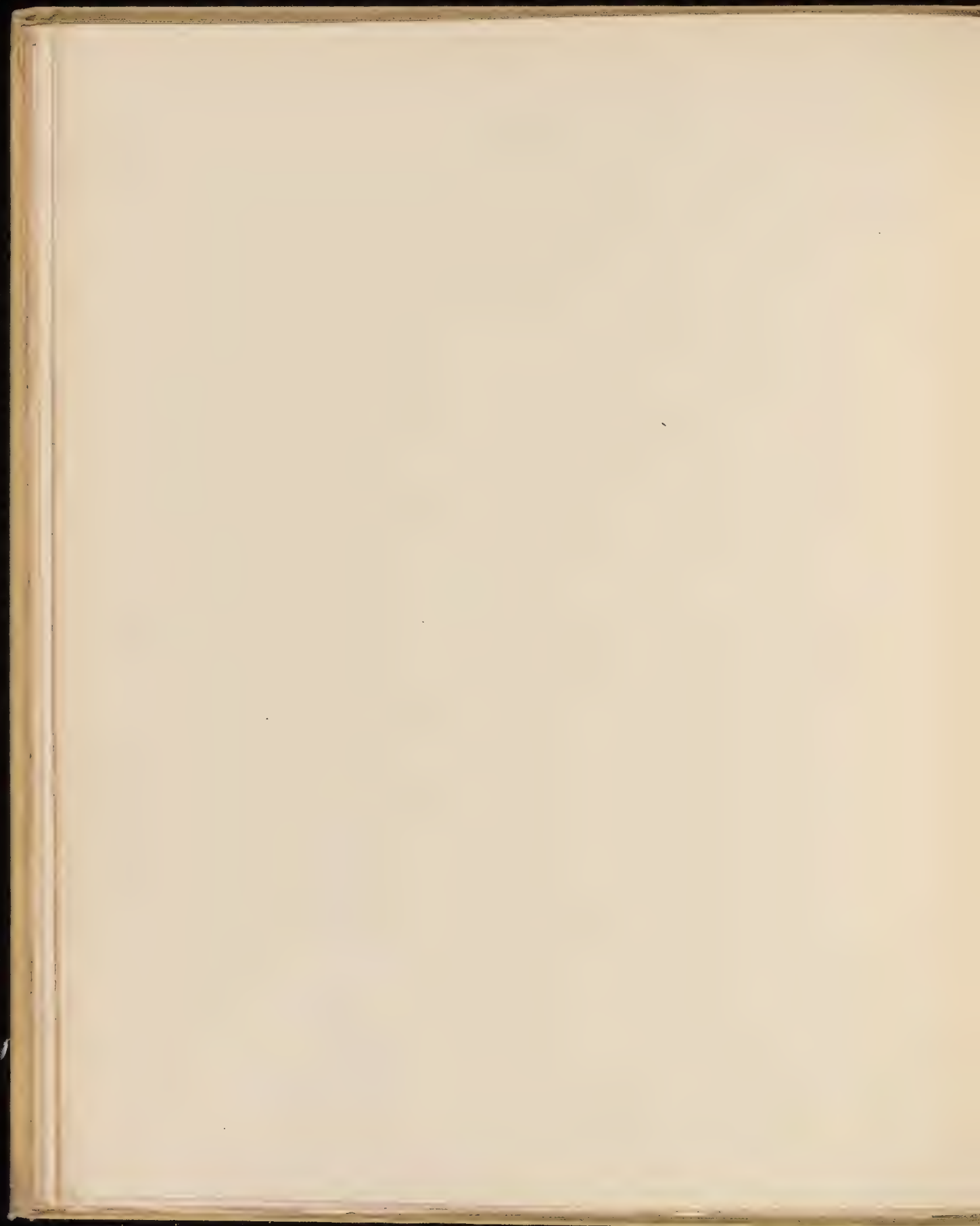
if the question had been threshed out before a legal tribunal. Mediators, however, interposed, the plaintiff was persuaded from proceeding further with his case, and the storm apparently blew over. There were, however, after-consequences from which Mr. Orrock was made to suffer—by means of veiled implication and covert innuendo on the part of partisans in the press—which impelled him to tell herewith the plain unvarnished tale.

Mr. Orrock's papers on the "Four Pillars of Water-Colour Art," namely, Turner, Cox, De Wint, Barret, and William Hunt, the "Prentice Pillar"—on Constable, Müller, and Bonington, with other contributions of his to the literature of Art Appreciation, have been placed in a setting which, it is hoped, will add to their interest as well as to their importance as monographs of the men. The mention of these great masters affords the opportunity of acknowledging the great kindness of Mr. Arthur Sanderson in allowing some very beautiful examples from his gallery to be reproduced as illustrations to the text.

In effecting the object of these volumes care has been taken to recite facts and opinions (the latter more sparingly than the former) set forth by other biographers of the painters and critics of their works. No attempt has been made at discovery. There was little new to be said, beyond what flowed from Mr. Orrock's pen. The story of the Life of Turner, for example, has been told over and over again, and yet told but once. With regard to other chapters in this work, written in and around, but it is claimed arising naturally out of, the leading theme, I say nothing here. Let them speak for themselves. Finally, I ask to be allowed to urge for myself, that my laborious yet thoroughly congenial task has to the utmost of my ability been earnestly and honestly performed.

BYRON WEBBER.





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<p style="margin: 0;">A favourite subject and a frequent sitter to the great portrait-painters of the period, sharing that distinction with Lady Hamilton, Kitty Fisher, Nelly O'Brien, and others. Reynolds painted a number of portraits of her, as "Perdita," as "Contemplation," and in her private character. Mrs. Mary Robinson was the daughter of a Captain Darby, who died at Bristol 1787. She was born in America. Mary was introduced to Garrick, and under his tuition and auspices prepared to appear as Cordelia. Her marriage, at the age of fifteen, with Mr. Robinson, prevented her intention from being carried out. However, she resumed it under the patronage of the Duchess of Devonshire, and appeared in the character of "Juliet" about 1776, and remained on the stage until 1779. She was a woman of considerable culture both in literature and art, of which there is evidence in her theatrical pieces, poems, and novels. In her character of "Perdita" she won the heart of the Prince of Wales, and he induced her to leave the stage, gave her his portrait set with diamonds and a bond for £20,000, payment of which was eventually refused. In a few months she was deserted, and after much trouble and correspondence obtained an annuity of £500 a year. She died December 26, 1800.</p>	
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James Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, was born at Westerham vicarage, Kent, in 1727; the eldest son of General Edward Wolfe; entered the army, 1742, and fought at Dettingen in the following year; served in Scotland in 1745 and 1746. In the expedition against Rochefort, 1757, he was Quartermaster-General; served under General Amherst, with the rank of colonel, against Cape Breton; the expedition for the capture of Quebec was confided to him; as major-general, commanding 9000 men, he sailed from England in February 1759, and on June 26 landed opposite to Quebec. The attack was successful, and at the dawn of day, September 13, he found himself on the plains of Abraham, routed the French, and the capitulation of Quebec followed, which decided the fate of Canada. Wolfe died in the hour of victory. His body was brought home and buried in Greenwich Church. Reynolds painted a portrait of Wolfe, in reference to which see Graves and Cronin's *History of the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.*

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"Arch little Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick was a favourite sitter to Sir Joshua."—*Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, by Graves and Cronin.

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<p>“Mrs. Mordaunt, afterwards Jane, Lady Dormer.          “Jane Cæsar Adellar; married first, General Mordaunt, and secondly, Sir Charles Cottrell Dormer, afterwards 8th Baron Dormer. Died September 1797.          “The picture belonged originally to Mr. Dormer of Rainham, Oxfordshire, and in 1877 to Mrs. Noseda, who sold it to Samuel Addington, and is now the property of James Orrock, R.I.”</p> <p>In another part of Messrs. Graves and Cronin's admirably exhaustive and painstaking work, from which the foregoing account is copied, we find that “the picture was sold by James Orrock, R.I., to the Hon. Harold Finch Hatton, the present owner.”</p>		
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<p>“He was a born painter of portraits. He looked people shrewdly between the eyes, surprised their manners in their face, and had possessed himself of what was essential in their character before they had been many minutes in his studio. What he was so swift to perceive he conveyed to the canvas almost in the moment of conception. He had never any difficulty, he said, about either hands or faces. About draperies, or light, or composition, he might see room for hesitation or afterthought. But a face or a hand was something plain and legible. There were no two ways about it, any more than about the person's name. . . . For you have, first, the authority of the artist, whom you recognise as no mean critic of the looks and manners of men; and next you have the tacit acquiescence of the subject, who sits looking out upon you with inimitable innocence, and apparently under the impression that he is in the room by himself. For Raeburn could plunge at once through all the constraint and embarrassment of the sitter, and present the face, clear, open, and intelligent as at the most disengaged moments.”</p> <p>—Robert Louis Stevenson.</p>		
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# JAMES ORROCK

## CHAPTER I

The medical profession and the art of painting—Mr. Orrock's father—Uncle Lawrie—A quaint old-world chemist—Dentistry—James Orrock and his brother Hector—James destined for a medical career—Begins to draw and "collect"—School, schoolmaster, and schoolfellows—At the Irvine Academy—First lessons in drawing—Mr. Ruskin's method anticipated—The Eglinton Tournament—"The Wild Marquis"—A medical student—Surgical dentistry determined on—"More time for painting"—The latter art pursued with Mr. James Ferguson—A student-dentist at Leicester—Surgery and art—Incessant and extensive sketching—The Trent barge—The late Captain May, R.I.—Exhibits and finds purchasers—Return to Edinburgh—Completion of medical studies—Takes two gold and one silver medal—Exhibits at the Royal Scottish Academy—A water-colour painter—His first master the late Mr. John Burgess of Leamington—Music—Learns the 'cello—The father of Sir Alexander Mackenzie—Cooke of the Edinburgh Theatre Orchestra.

WITHOUT being common, instances of men who had qualified for and achieved some distinction in the Sciences and the Services finally devoting themselves to the professions of Painting and Sculpture, are not rare. Doctors, soldiers, and clergymen have practised drawing and painting frequently enough. Sir Henry Thompson's is a notable case in point. It is related of Uwins that while he was a Royal Academy student "he attended Sir Charles Bell's anatomical class, and his drawings of the muscles were much praised for their truthfulness by that eminent surgeon, himself an excellent artist." The historian of the Water Colour Society, in one of the earliest of the biographies which chiefly inform that painstaking work, states that "Edmund Dorrell was another of the many good artists who have been induced by a natural longing to take up the brush in preference



## James Orrock

to the occupation designed for them by the guardians of their youth. He was brought up by an uncle, who intended to make him a doctor, having himself a good medical practice at Warwick, where Dorrell was born in 1788; but helped him to be a painter when he discovered his bent." The renowned Peter De Wint, whose father was a physician, at the age of eighteen abandoned the study of the healing art, upon which he had unwillingly entered, to bind himself apprentice for seven years to John Raphael Smith,<sup>1</sup> who was to teach him "the arts and mysteries of engraving and portrait painting." That the whole business of Reynolds's life was devoted to painting was due to the fortunate accident of his father's changing a mind that was originally set on making his son a doctor. Here is a theme for dreamers of what might have been! Mr. Edmund G. Müller, brother of the famous painter of that name, followed the profession of an artist, although he was educated first for the medical profession. What may be called the Romance of Painting abounds with instances of men who have forsaken their allotted calling and prosecuted the art. Amongst them are artists who have left their mark on their own and succeeding generations. You find such men everywhere: Claude at the pastry-cook's, Quintin Matsys at the anvil, Thomas Stothard at the loom, Cotman in a linendraper's shop, Hoppner and Callcott in the choir, Opie at the carpenter's, Northcote at the watchmaker's, and Raeburn at the goldsmith's bench, and Stanfield and Chambers at sea. There is no romance in the life of Mr. James Orrock, and there will be no effort made to read romance into it; but the frequent alliance of the medical with the painting art suggested the opening note in this the first chapter of the present work.

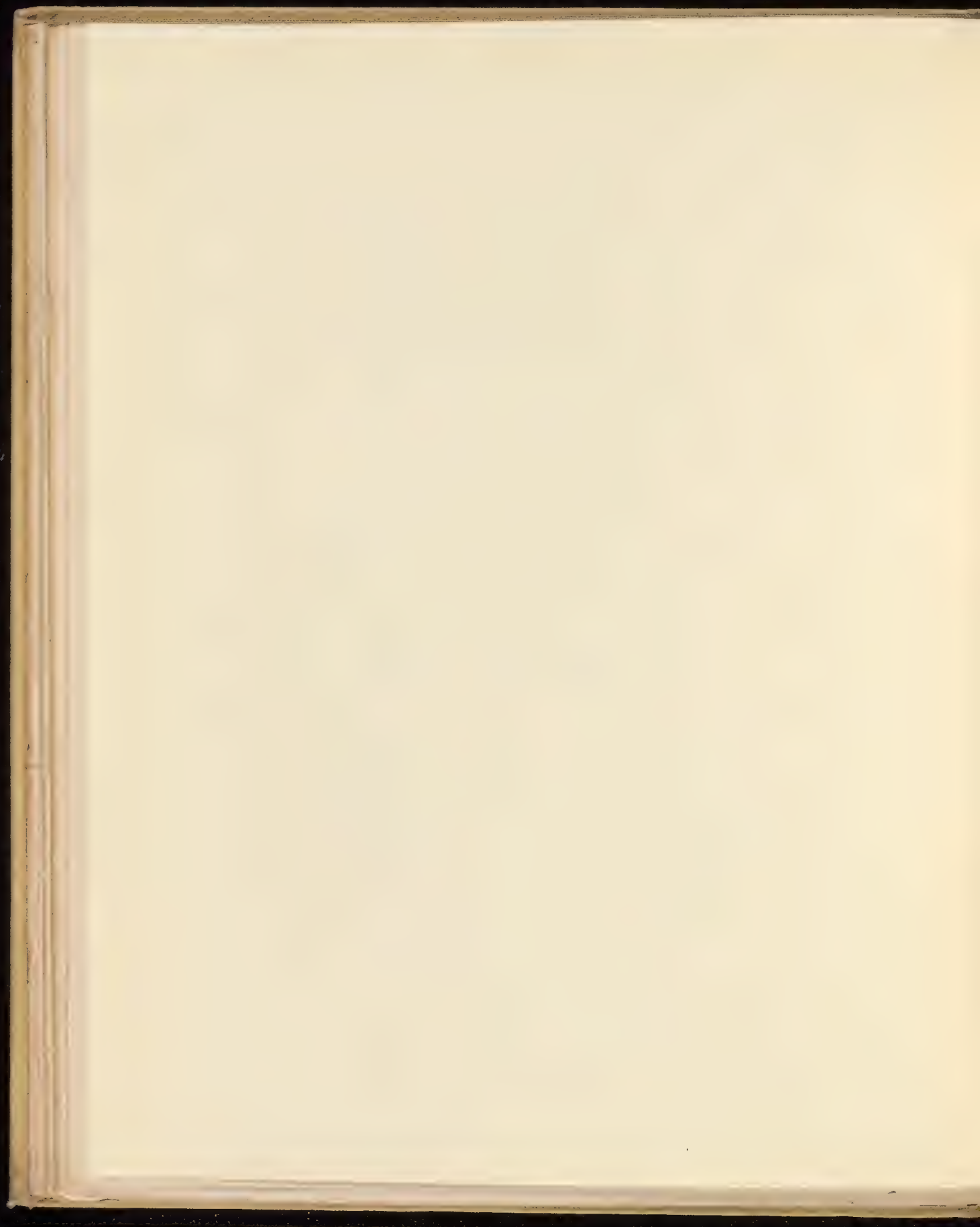
We find the father of Mr. Orrock in the 'forties and 'fifties established at No. 7 Abercromby Place, in the West End of Edinburgh, as one of the principal dentists of the city. He was originally a chemist, and had been apprenticed in that capacity to his Uncle Lawrie, who was a lecturer on chemistry, in his own little back room

<sup>1</sup> Known best, perhaps, for his fine mezzo-tint engravings after Reynolds and Morland.



James Orrich

OLD TOLBOOTH, CANONGATE, EDINBURGH. (PENCIL SKETCH.) 1850.





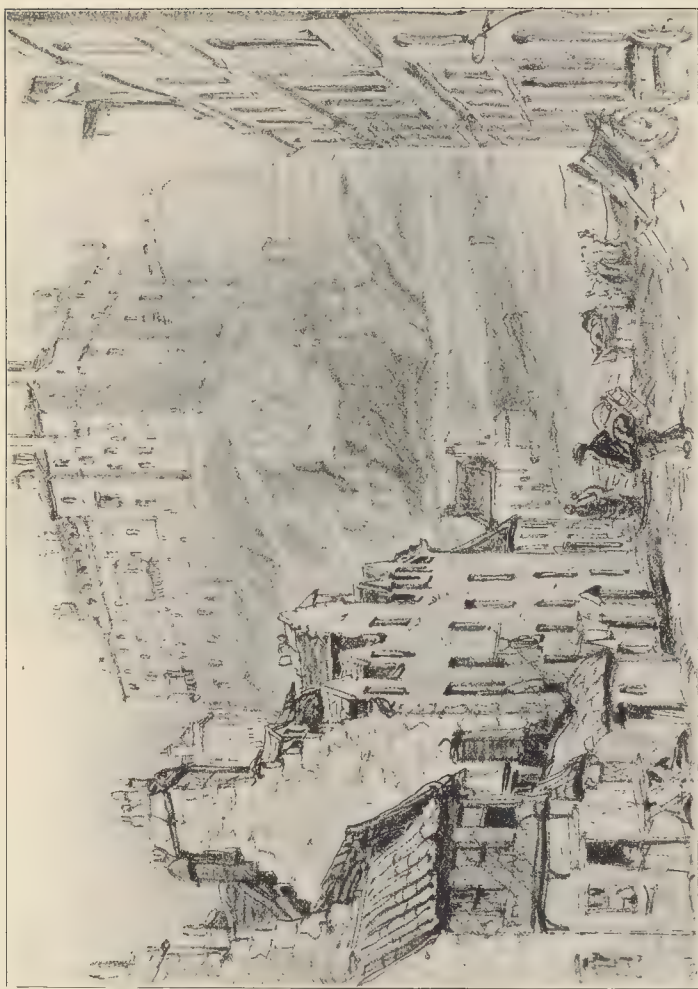
## *James Orrock*

or laboratory "behind the shop." There, with his cap or bonnet on, and the professionally appointed apartment dimly lighted with a couple of tallow candles, the lecturer discoursed and demonstrated in homely yet practically scientific fashion. It was a study for a Dutch artist, or for Wilkie himself, that old-world school of chemistry. One is reminded of the Glasgow "shop" whereto Osbaldistone repaired after his duel with Rashleigh, "the sign of which intimated the indweller to be Christopher Neilson, surgeon and apothecary." With Uncle Lawrie we have no further concern. His nephew, Mr. James Orrock, senior, was for a time partner with his half-brother, Thomas Orrock, Member of the College of Surgeons. On Thomas's death, Mr. James Orrock abandoned the business of chemist and devoted himself thenceforward exclusively to the practice of dentistry at his residence, No. 2 York Place. He succeeded from the very first, and, the connection augmenting, the now fashionable practitioner purchased the house referred to in Abercromby Place, and it was from thence that the boy James went to school. Mr. Orrock's father was twice married. There were four surviving children born of the first wife; and of the two boys, Hector Heatly Orrock was articled to Henderson, the well-known architect and reviver of Gothic in Scotland. Henderson designed Glenalmond College in Perthshire, which is allowed by competent judges to be one of the noblest examples of modern Gothic across the Border. James was the elder son. From his father, who, besides being a sound chemist, had studied surgery, he derived the aptitude of hand and brain which, combined with a spirit of dogged perseverance, stood him in good stead in an apprenticeship to the profession which was destined for him; from his mother he derived his passion for the arts of Music and Painting. Boswell, anticipating Wordsworth, says that "the boy is the man in miniature." Those who seek for indications of the full-statured painter in the earliest efforts of his nascent genius or talent are likely to meet with disappointment. The pretty legend of Benjamin West's first drawing, with which he amazed his fond relations when he was seven years of age, and the story—told by himself—of Mr. Sidney Cooper's sketch

## *James Orrock*

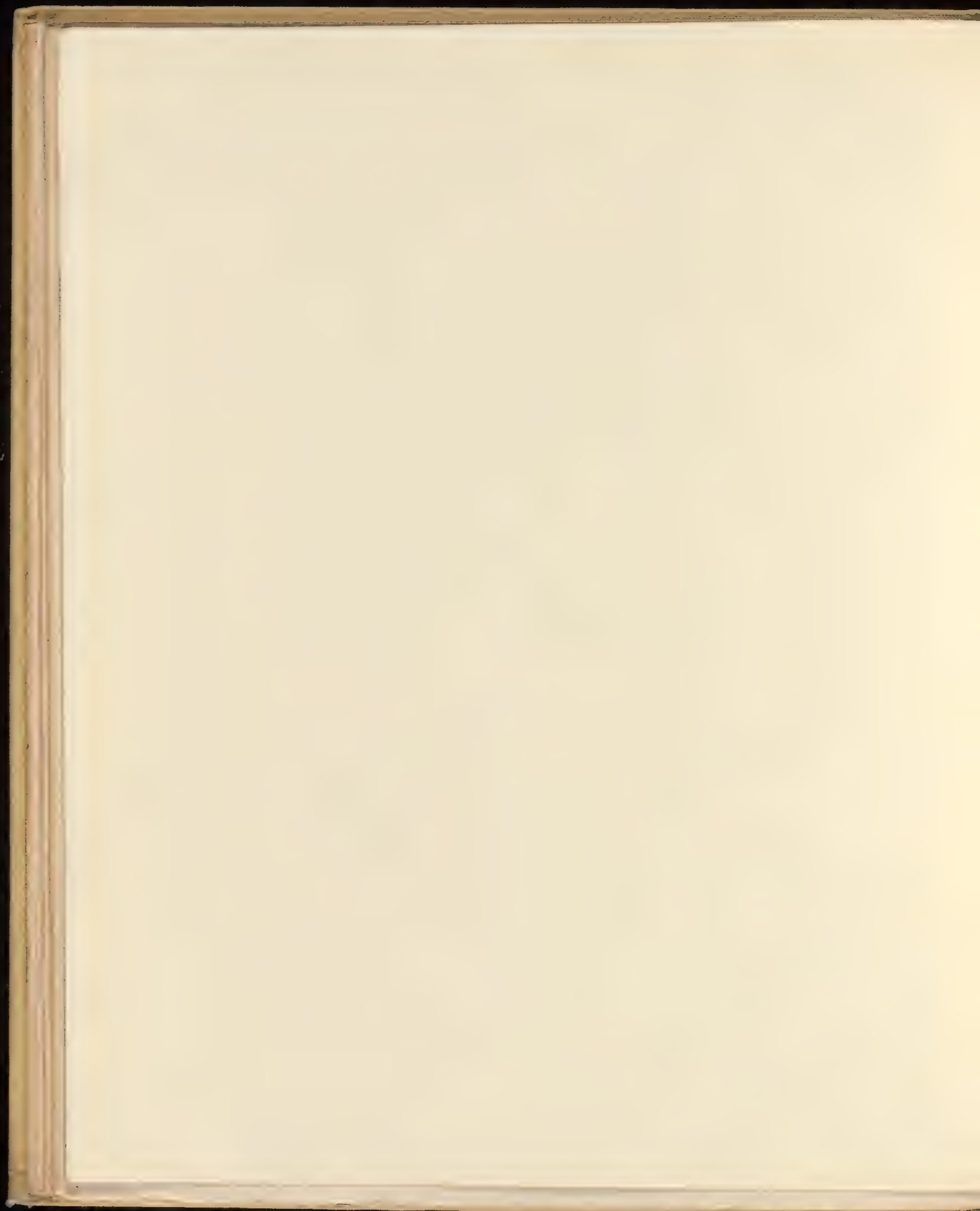
of Canterbury Cathedral made upon a slate, become interesting in proportion to the eminence subsequently achieved by the infants who make such promising beginnings. But of the thousands of youthful Benjamin Wests and Sidney Coopers and Millais, who never rose beyond their earliest efforts to draw, or, if they did, were absorbed into the myriads of the mediocrities, we have naturally no record. If it were profitable to pursue a consideration of the subject, it would not be difficult to show that the earliest exhibitors of what is called genius, or, to employ the more modest term, talent, in art, seldom acquire distinction. Many a brilliant beginner has been known to flash for an instant and go out for ever. It needs no drawing-master, no curator of or visitor at the Royal Academy schools—to bring the illustration, as it were, up to date—to testify to the failure of the splendidly promising student whom everybody admired, and the protracted climb to the top of the toiler who wrought on almost unheeded and finally “got there.” There is no Benjamin West legend to be found in the early life of Mr. Orrock. It may, however, be said that he made attempts at drawing before he was able to write, and that he was never happier than when he had a pencil and paper at his disposal. He began to draw in his remote boyhood, and he has been drawing and painting ever since. A trait in his character as a youngster proved that the child meant to father the man. He made a collection of prints and engravings, and his portfolio was his most cherished toy.

James Orrock's first schoolmaster was a Mr. John Fisher, a friend of George and Andrew Combe, the phrenologists and writers on popular physiology. The school was situated in George Street. Mr. Fisher, as his sympathy with the author of “The Constitution of Man” proved, was, for Scotland in those days, a person of advanced ideas. The schoolmaster, who enjoyed the esteem and friendship of the father of Mr. Orrock, had known Sir Walter Scott, and was full of interesting recollections of the author of “Waverley,” which the boy often heard him relate. With reference to a figure in the medical world who became famous during the period of



EDINBURGH CASTLE, FROM THE GRASSMARKET. (PENCIL SKETCH.) 1854.









J. H. B. 1892

EDINBURGH, FROM THE BRAID HILLS. WATERCOLOUR SKETCH. 1892.



## James Orrock

Mr. Orrock's youth, be it mentioned that Mr. Orrock's father knew Simpson intimately, and had known him from his boyhood. Both of them, indeed, were born at Kirkliston. The circumstances which led to the step which placed Sir James Simpson on the high road to renown form of themselves a splendid chapter in the history of medical science. To relate them here, to pay adequate tribute to Simpson's brother, and to the Messrs. Law, the coffee merchants, in respect of the generous part which they played in equipping one of the noblest of Scotland's sons for the accomplishment of his great achievement, would be to travel beyond the record. The Simpson episode is mentioned simply for the side-light which it throws on a distinguished section of Edinburgh society in which Mr. Orrock found himself in his youth.

At the age of eight he was placed at the Irvine Academy—in the country of Robert Burns—as a boarder with the Rev. G. Corsan, the head-master. It was there that the boy received his first lessons in the art he loved from Mr. White, a capable if an old-fashioned drawing-master. The system of drawing from models, in ordinary schools at any rate, had yet to be born. The prevailing method was persistent copying from the flat. This practice, however, proved a blessing in disguise to the zealous boy in laying for him a foundation of accurately imitative skill, the advantage of which he feels to this day. It made him a point-draughtsman. His copies of engravings of Lawrence's and Landseer's pictures were not only singularly correct but marvellously like the engraver's treatment of the plates. The *mécanique* of the engraver was reproduced with curious fidelity. When Mr. Ruskin was shown some of those pen-and-ink drawings, he was not only impressed with their exquisite quality but delightedly interested to find that a boy should have anticipated one of his methods of teaching tone and touch, and demonstrated its value.<sup>1</sup> A well-known London engraver, who had meantime examined

<sup>1</sup> "If you feel discouraged by the delicacy required, and begin to think that engraving is not drawing, and that copying it cannot help you to draw, remember that it differs from common drawing only by the difficulties it has to encounter. And the trying to copy these plates will be good

## James Orrock

the copies in question, entreated Mr. Orrock to abandon his medical studies and master the art of engraving on steel. Mr. Orrock attaches the utmost importance to the mastery of point-draughtsmanship, which he is persuaded he acquired, or at all events the basis of it, while he was at school at Irvine. "Breadth!" he exclaims, when treatment is in discussion; "all artists should be able to draw accurately and at ease with the point. That, certainly, to begin with. Breadth will follow—if they *are* artists."

Who has not heard in some way of the Eglinton Tournament? The Earl of Eglinton, a sort of sporting Admirable Crichton, and, as veterans of the Turf who recall the victory of the "tartan" over the "spots" will take care to remind you, the owner of the Flying Dutchman, was also a knight of chivalry who had been born a few centuries too late. He organised the Tournament on the model of the tilting described in "Ivanhoe" at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; he was two years engaged in the work of preparation, and, it is said, the affair cost him £50,000. As a writer has succinctly put it, "everything that could make the spectacle brilliant and imposing was there—beautiful women, picturesque costumes, superb decorations, gorgeous pavilions, splendid horses, athletic figures in brilliant armour; only one thing was wanting—fine weather." Alas! it rained in torrents with little or no abatement, and although a partial cessation of the downpour admitted of a corresponding prosecution of the mimic battle, the pageant, as such, was ruined. Mr. Orrock was at school at Irvine at the time, and, with some of his schoolfellows, witnessed the Tournament. He says:—

"In the school session 1839-40 my late brother, the architect, Hector Orrock, was a fellow-boarder with me at the Rev. George Corsan's, the head-master at the public school at Irvine in Ayrshire. In one of the years named [it was in 1839], the Tournament took place at Eglinton Castle. The preparations were on a grand and

for you, because it will awaken you to the real labour and skill of the engraver, and make you understand a little how people must work in this world, who have really to *do* anything in it. You might be able to get tones as even and touches as firm."—MR. RUSKIN, "Elements of Drawing."

## *James Orrock*

enormous scale, and crowds of people came from all parts of the kingdom, and even from foreign countries, to witness the display. Lord Eglinton, a splendid man, accomplished in all field sports, was Lord of the Tournament, and Lady Seymour was the Queen of Love and Beauty. This lady is, I believe, still living, and I think Lord Thynne, her relative, told me so when I was on a visit to him about a year ago.

"However, I saw, of course, the knights in their armour, riding down the streets on their way to the tilting ground for the rehearsals. One of them was the Marquis of Waterford, called 'the wild Marquis,' Lord Eglinton's great friend. The Marquis's horses were stabled at our master's house, and we witnessed a great deal of the bustling preparations. I went to the Tournament with a number of the schoolboys and my fellow-boarders, for, of course, we had a holiday, and although we were drenched and literally soaked to the skin by 'the Tournament rain,' we enjoyed ourselves immensely and saw all there was to see of the whole pageant.

"There was a grand wooden ball-room built in the castle grounds which suffered greatly from the downpour, and the tents of the knights, which were numerous and picturesque, were also much despoiled. Lord Eglinton was the *Ivanhoe* of the Tournament. He had weight and youth, and, added to his splendid physique, he was a finished horseman. He was therefore the indisputable knight of the tilt-yard. Lord Eglinton, I may observe, was the patron of our school, so we boys were delighted to do him honour. 'The wild Marquis,' with some boon companions, kept the town of Irvine alive by their riotous freaks and practical jokes. I remember red-hot pence being thrown out of the hotel windows amongst the populace. The coin had been heated in frying-pans. Medals were struck in honour of the Eglinton Tournament, but they seem to have entirely disappeared. This is all I can clearly call to mind after so great a lapse of time."

"The wild Marquis" does not come out with knightly honour in the incident of the red-hot coppers. He, however, had done

## James Orrock

himself athletic justice in the Tournament. It is related that in the *mêlée* with swords he and Lord Alford "distinguished themselves by losing their tempers and laying on to each other with such vigorous and lusty strokes that, had they not been separated by the marshals, one or both of them would probably have been maimed for life, for both were exceptionally powerful and athletic men." The boy Orrock could scarcely be expected to take an interest in Prince Louis Napoleon (afterwards the Emperor Napoleon III.), even if he had known that that man of mystery had made a good record as a swordsman in a foot tournament indoors. And he was too young, one conjectures, to regard the Rowena as a romantic feature. It is stated by one historian of the Tournament that the Queen of Love and Beauty appeared before a miserably drenched multitude under a dripping umbrella.

When Mr. Orrock finished his schooling at Irvine and returned to Edinburgh, it was to address himself seriously to his duties as a medical student. He wrought hard. He duly attended a course of lectures at the University, and, concurrently, another course "outside," the latter counting with the former in the curriculum. After the first session the student, while bent on succeeding in the examinations in surgery and practice of medicine, had determined to devote himself, on receiving his qualification, to the practice of surgeon-dentistry. As a medical man, he reasoned, he would never be able to call any portion of his time his own. As a dentist his hours of business would be fewer and more regularly defined. And in the latter capacity he would have what he had set his mind on obtaining, namely, time for his painting, which, by-the-bye, he had begun under the tuition of Mr. James Ferguson, with oil-paints provided by the elder Mr. Orrock, who was at least interested in his son's leisure being congenially employed. This instruction made him a painter long before he was a dentist.

In order to perfect himself in the mechanical branch of dentistry, Mr. Orrock crossed the Border and joined Mr. Williamson, dentist at Leicester, who had been his father's ablest pupil-assistant, and



## *James Orrock*

was in his calling accounted one of the first mechanics of the time. Mr. Williamson taught young Mr. Orrock all he knew, working sedulously at the bench with him, and in due course the pupil became as proficient as the master, in proof whereof the master very soon paid the pupil the salary of a first-class assistant. For the space of five years Mr. Orrock attended the Leicester Dispensary for the study of surgical operations. At Leicester, too, with the cordial approval and practical encouragement of his master, he diligently kept up his drawing and painting, devoting every moment he could snatch from professional work with Mr. Williamson to what was the true vocation of his heart. He sketched incessantly out of doors, frequently rising at four o'clock on summer mornings to make journeys into the country, every paintable part of which he familiarised himself with. The pastoral scenery of the Soar, and that of the tributaries of the placidest of Midland rivers, with the country seats and old mills and farmsteads of Leicestershire and Notts, belts of the yet wild woodland of Sherwood Forest, and the unspoiled commons that were to be found all over "the Dukeries," afforded him abundant employment. He drew at large with varying attack over a wide space of country, but he also drew accessory objects and studies of landscape furniture—if the term be permissible—with painstaking minuteness and careful attention to detail. It is not pretended that the young student's procedure was unusual. It is, however, claimed for him that few artists have wrought harder, or with more unrelenting application, in order to efficiently draw and paint the facts and phenomena of English landscape. If genius, as has been said, consists in an infinite capacity to take pains, then is Mr. Orrock a genius. His enormous collection of sketch-books, the accumulation of years, bears testimony to his scientific ardour and determination to conquer every essential part of his subject, and of a prodigious variety of the accessory branches of it. Trees, underwood, flowers, weeds, herbage, with faithful records of the season and time of day, were diligently set down. At rest, or with the wind sweeping over

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them, and the cloud-shadows giving them accidental forms and aspects, the living things of inanimate Nature were observed and recorded, these studies being enlightened with written notes, such as Turner was wont to make complete chronicles in those sketches of his that were so pregnant of meaning to him and so vague and scratchy and unintelligible to other observers. The skies, whereof Mr. Orrock possesses a marvellously rich record, are never haphazard passages in his landscapes. He has only to recur to his notes to realise them in all the freshness of nature and glory of colour, literally reading them in the original transcript "like a book."

The Trent was naturally comprehended within the sketcher's excursions. The canal boat, so frequent an object in the landscapes of the most English of our painters, Mr. Orrock drew over and over again. There was not a type of canal boat, or a variant of a type, that he did not draw with all its "facts" and in every view. "Why did you do so many?" asked a brother of the brush who was looking over the record. "Because I wanted to know, to be quite sure," was the reply. "It is my habit to leave nothing, not even the smallest detail, to memory." Not that he was not training his pictorial memory at the same time by the soundest means. Many years after those pleasant days spent on the banks of the Trent, in the course of a friendly discussion with his brother member of the Institute, the late Captain May, Mr. Orrock surprised the old sailor by displaying the sketches he had made of all kinds of shipping. It was to determine an amicable dispute. Captain May, who had never seen a Trent barge, doubted whether one of a peculiar build, represented in a drawing which he mentioned, was true to nature. Mr. Orrock had no difficulty in convincing his friend that the vessel in question was "right." In the spirit of *camaraderie* which exists in the artistic brotherhood, Mr. Orrock placed his studies of shipping at the disposal of the marine painter, who not infrequently turned the carefully detailed "facts" to useful account. During Mr. Orrock's association with Mr. Williamson in the Midlands he sent drawings

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to various exhibitions, and added substantially to his income by the practice of his art.

On his return to Edinburgh Mr. Orrock resumed work as a medical student, and attended courses of lectures in medicine and surgery both at the University and the extra-Academical school. The great lights of the medical world in Edinburgh at that period were Professors Syme, Henderson, Bennett, Goodsir, and Simpson. "Christopher North" yet flourished, and Mr. Orrock, with other students, frequently took the opportunity of hearing him lecture. Inspired with one of the most powerful motives that can spur on a young man who has to carve out his own fortune, the young medical student wrought on with redoubled ardour. He was engaged to be married. The lady to whom he was engaged, and who in due course became his wife and has continued to be the partner of his life till now, was the daughter of Charles Gould, Esquire, of Leicester. This constituted a second and most important link between Mr. Orrock and the English Midlands, and, among other consequences, led to his settlement at Nottingham in a professional capacity as a dental surgeon. Without dwelling on the progress which he made in his studies, the result of them, in honours achieved, should be mentioned. He took the senior gold medal for anatomy, the corresponding gold medal for surgery, and the silver medal for obstetrics. Nevertheless, he had unceasingly maintained the practice of painting, having resumed his studies with Mr. Ferguson, and he managed to find time to produce pictures which were exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy. Amongst the Scottish painters with whom he was personally acquainted at the period named were Mr. T. Faed, R.A., Mr. James Archer, R.S.A., Mr. Houston, R.S.A., and Mr. M'Culloch, R.S.A. Some of Mr. Orrock's art-work accomplished at the same time proved practically helpful to him in following his medical studies. He made diagrams for the extra-Academical lectures. It is perhaps worthy of note, recollecting that Turner's very earliest practice in water-colour was of the like kind, that Mr. Orrock coloured a great many drawings for his brother Hector, who had "served his time" with

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Henderson, and was now established on his own account as an architect.

Mr. Orrock returned to Edinburgh more ardent in his determination to pursue the study of painting than before, and was also better equipped for the pursuit. He had, while resident in the Midlands, begun the serious study of painting in water-colour, and was fortunate enough to become the pupil of the late John Burgess of Leamington, member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, who was his first master in that medium. Mr. Orrock owes a special debt to this master, inasmuch as for a series of years he was permitted to accompany him in sketching expeditions out of doors. Mr. Burgess was not only a skilled water-colour painter, but one of the finest pencil draughtsmen of his time. He was, moreover, one of the ablest experts and connoisseurs of art in England. Mr. Orrock, however, did not suffer his preference for the medium of water-colour to displace his practice of the art in oil. There was at that period little special encouragement to a water-colour artist in Scotland, and there were no notable exemplars of the art in the Scottish School to encourage or excite a student's emulation. Scottish water-colour art at the best was undeveloped. Mr. Orrock, keenly sensitive to the beauty and grandeur and manifold picturesqueness, in its architecture especially, of the matchless city, filled his sketch-book with pictorial records, made out with loving care, of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crag, Craigmillar Castle, and executed numerous drawings of what may be broadly termed Sir Walter Scott's Edinburgh. The latter, as will be perceived in the selection—necessarily a small one—reproduced in the present volume, possess, beyond their charming Prout-like feeling and recorded facts, a curious antiquarian interest. There are features in the Edinburgh which Mr. Orrock sketched in his youth that have changed or disappeared since the drawings were made. Mingled with these we occasionally find sketches made in the neighbourhood of his father's country house "down the Firth" at Prestonpans.

Amongst the literary celebrities other than Professor Wilson, remembered by Mr. Orrock, may be mentioned Lord Jeffrey and



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Thomas Carlyle. The Theatre Royal was yet under the control of Edinburgh's most famous manager, W. H. Murray, who was in some respects, although a solider character than the airy autocrat and versatile comedian immortalised by Charles Lamb, the Elliston of Scotland. It was a theatre with a splendid history. One of the Nasmyths and David Roberts had painted its scenery, and the orchestra had numbered fine musicians in its ranks. The Orrock family were musical, and James in time took a part on the violoncello at the fireside quartette parties. His teacher was Cooke, who was a member of the theatre orchestra, under the leadership of James Dewar, when Alexander Mackenzie was one of the first violins. Mackenzie was Hector Orrock's friend and teacher, and was an occasional visitor at Abercromby Place. He was subsequently appointed leader of the orchestra under Murray's management. In one of the manager's opening addresses, he began:—

“Prythee, Mackenzie, your Cremona stop,  
While I solicit custom for the shop—  
I'll be as brief as possible—and then  
Resume your polkas and quadrilles again.”

The testimony of the historian of the Edinburgh stage<sup>1</sup> to an able and worthy man, and the father of a son more distinguished than himself, may be allowed to finish the present chapter. “Mackenzie not only kept the orchestra up to its old standard, but even brought it to exceed its former efficiency. He was himself an admirable executant on the violin, and a first-rate musician, which qualifications, united to great energy, sound common sense, and great attraction of person and manner, could not fail in making a mark on the musical department of the theatre. For its size, the Edinburgh orchestra may be said to have been the first in the kingdom, and it made successful annual visits to London. Mackenzie's early death in 1857 was to be deeply regretted. In his son, Dr. A. C. (Sir Alexander) Mackenzie, however, he left a legacy to music that his country can never be too proud of.”

<sup>1</sup> “The Annals of the Edinburgh Stage,” by James C. Dibdin.

## CHAPTER II

Burgess of Leamington—Work with him—Experience at Bettws-y-Coed—"Fat Hoyle"—Creswick and the bore—A Nottingham school of design—The Fussell brothers—Stewart Smith—His power and versatility as a painter—"A man who could paint anything"—Unknown in London—The Smith Institute, Stirling—Foundation at Nottingham of the Orrock collection—Mr. William Lockwood—Richard Parkes Bonington—A Nottinghamshire man—His training French, his art English—The finest of "First intention" painters—The delights of sketching from nature—After dinner—Rustic songs and rustic humour—The story of the mammoth pig.

MENTION has been made of Mr. Orrock's indebtedness in his art to "Burgess of Leamington." His association with that skilful artist and most amiable man was too intimate, extended over too important a period in the most impressionable part of his early life, and had too deep an influence on his career as a painter, to be briefly dismissed in the present narrative. Burgess took Mr. Orrock with him to sketch out of doors, and for successive years they went into Wales, Scotland, and various parts of England together. Mr. Orrock, in his ripened experience of such work, speaks of Burgess as one of the finest draughtsmen in pencil and chalk he ever knew, and he is persuaded that no man drew and painted architectural subjects with a surer hand or with more artistic knowledge and feeling. Burgess was also one of the most competent judges of Art, and being in comfortable circumstances he possessed, collected by himself, many fine works of the masters, both English and foreign. Mr. Orrock frequently spent the Sunday at Leamington with Burgess and Art, returning to his professional duties on the following day. He feels that Burgess led him to appreciate "the true art," and taught him practically the modes and methods of water-colour painting. Those were happy days indeed when the two friends, in their tastes as one, abroad

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applied themselves to delightfully congenial work, and at home discussed the characteristics of Cox, Müller, Barret, Fielding, Holland, and Constable, whose works Burgess possessed. Together they frequently visited Gillott and William Hall and Charles Radclyffe at Birmingham. Hall was a noted connoisseur, and (as is noted elsewhere in the present work) the friend and pupil of David Cox. Mr. Orrock obtained the foundation of his knowledge of the English masters chiefly from these sources. Gillott at the period referred to had one of the most splendid collections of English pictures in Great Britain. His Turners, Eттys, Coxes, Müllers, Hunts, &c., were unrivalled.

Burgess and Mr. Orrock made a memorable sketching expedition to Bettws-y-Coed, and as the "Oak" was full they put up at the "Waterloo." There happened at that time to be a permanent resident at the inn named Hoyle, a character who figures in the pages of William Hall's "Life of Cox." He was, like Falstaff, a huge fat man. He had been a traveller for the well-known Manchester house of the same name, and was comfortably "retired" on a pension. According to the accepted tradition, the firm had at length dispensed with their redundant representative's services because he was found to be too bulky to squeeze himself into a railway carriage. Hoyle was an amateur artist, and was never happier than when he was permitted to foregather with the painters who visited Bettws. He was, however, apt to become a bore; and when Creswick came to Bettws to paint, the Royal Academician soon found him intolerable. Creswick's temper, like that of Mr. Justice Stareleigh, occasionally bordered on the irritable, and he could not bear to be disturbed at his work. One day "Fat Hoyle," as he was called, after overlooking the painter's progress with a sketch, asked him with what medium he mixed his colours? Creswick, suddenly turning upon his tormentor, said, "I never use fat oil!" At the "Waterloo" Burgess and his youthful companion occupied a double-bedded room. On the first night of their tenancy of the apartment they were simultaneously

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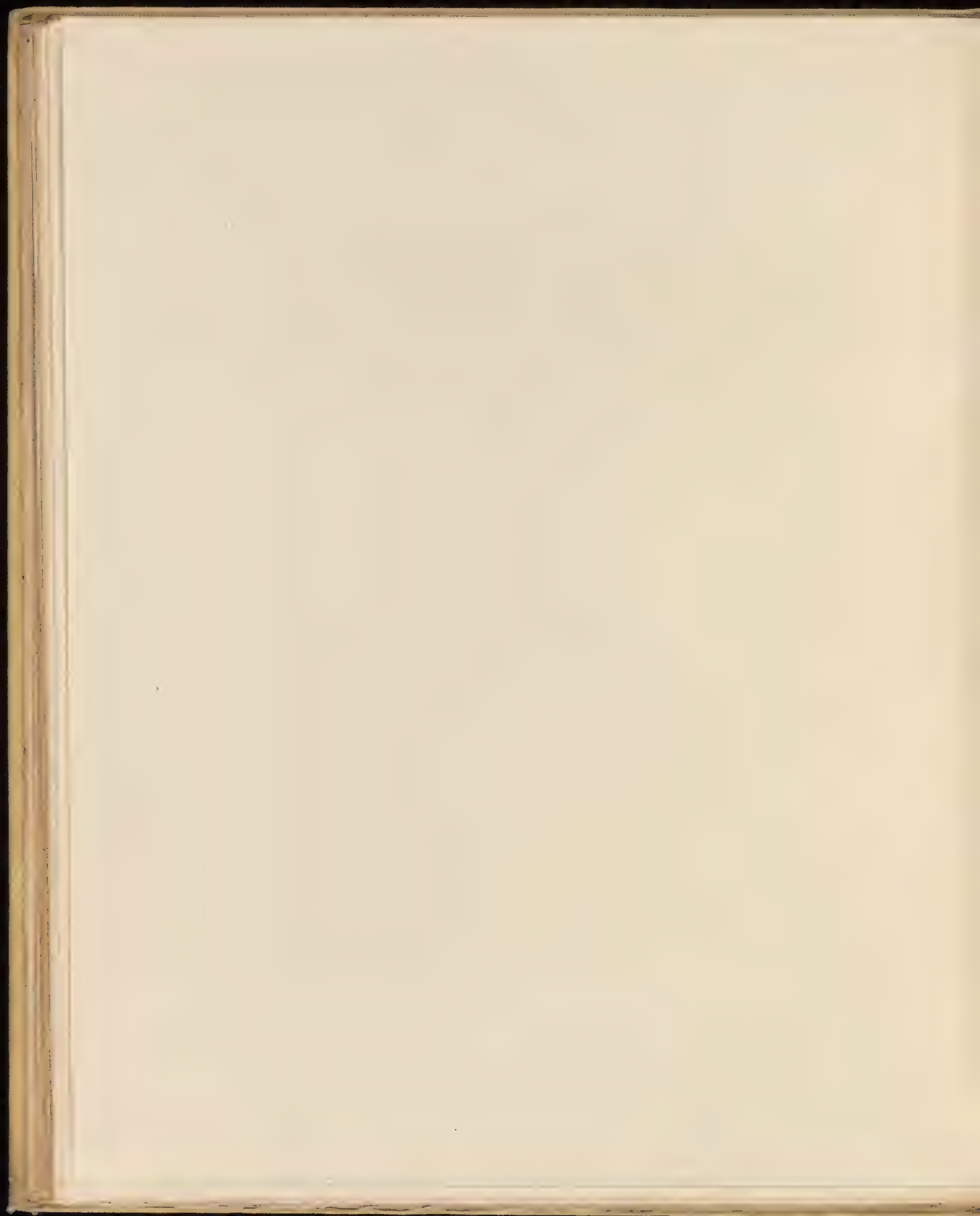
aroused by a deep, booming, cavernous sound which neither of them could identify. It seemed to them like nothing in nature. But it "kept on" with a sort of disordered regularity, now more now less violent, and it occurred to both the awakened sleepers that something unusual had taken place. Mr. Orrock ran along the corridor and, after awaking the landlord, ascertained from that unconcerned individual that "It was only Fat Hoyle snoring. *They* were all used to it. And," he added, "so will you be, if you stay long enough." The story of the widow who, having lost a husband whose snore was as powerful as Mr. Hoyle's, ordered her maidservant to grind coffee in order to lull her to slumber, was recalled to Mr. Orrock's mind as he returned to bed and assured Burgess that there was no cause for alarm. "Fat Hoyle" was a character who will never be forgotten as long as the story of David Cox at Bettws-y-Coed is remembered.

When after his marriage Mr. Orrock established himself at Nottingham, he lost no time in entering himself as a student at the Nottingham School of Design, an academy conducted on what might be broadly termed the South Kensington system, and drew regularly there. The masters of the school were two brothers named Fussell, worthy and painstaking men, who were capable in their vocation, but not great painters. A study of the draped figure was included in the course of instruction. Amongst the medals which Mr. Orrock has had awarded him during his double career is one conferred at the School of Design in question. As it happened, his art as well as the profession he was practising brought him many notable friends, amongst the rest Archdeacon Wilkins, brother of the architect of the National Gallery, and himself an amateur painter. The Archdeacon had come to Mr. Orrock's house to avail himself of his services as a dentist, and was surprised to discover a number of drawings on the walls of places in the neighbourhood familiar to him, among others a drawing of Haddon Hall. He asked Mr. Orrock the name of the painter, and, on hearing that the painter was Mr. Orrock





*The Lottery Ticket.*



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himself, he expressed his desire to purchase the drawing referred to. Mr. Orrock, however, thought it undesirable, for professional reasons, to sell the drawing; but was glad to be able to prevail on Dr. Wilkins to accept it as a gift. This was the beginning of a friendship with a ripe scholar and cultured gentleman, which was, in unnumbered ways, of immense benefit to Mr. Orrock personally and professionally. He frequently visited Southwell, of which Cathedral Dr. Wilkins was Archdeacon, and being an enthusiast in true and fine Gothic, it was an abiding pleasure to him to study the Cathedral, some of whose features are unsurpassed for purity and loveliness, in company with the Archdeacon, and to hear him eloquent in its praise.

Another artist who came into Mr. Orrock's life, and who had a great deal to do with directing and informing his art practice in those important Nottingham days, was Stewart Smith. He was a professional artist who had studied in Rome and Paris, and who was to all intents and purposes a master. He was on the most intimate terms with John Phillip, R.A., and was a frequent visitor to his studio. Phillip said of him that he was one of the best of living colourists. Phillip and he had exchanged sketches. During what was intended to be a flying visit to Nottingham, Stewart Smith was introduced to Mr. Orrock. He drew the portrait of the latter in crayons. The commission brought others, and the artist took up his abode in Nottingham, where he remained for several years. Stewart Smith lives in the memory of the subject of this narrative as a richly cultured, widely travelled, and singularly interesting man. He had known Troyon and most of the other masters of the Barbizon school. Professor Owen, the distinguished comparative anatomist, was an intimate friend of his. With Stewart Smith Mr. Orrock studied nightly, after "professional" hours, and wrought strenuously to acquire under that accomplished and untiring master a knowledge of the manifold mysteries of light and shade. Master and pupil also sketched together from nature. Mr. Orrock speaks of him as "a man who could paint anything." He, like Etty and Turner,

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would at times paint a still-life subject, and produce a work of the highest class. Years after Stewart Smith's death, at a conversazione held in London at the Arts Club, there were two pictures exhibited which were "by an artist unknown." "These are fine things!" exclaimed an attracted observer. "Who is the painter?" "I can tell you," replied Mr. Orrock. "They are by my old master, Stewart Smith." Inheriting a fortune late in life, Stewart Smith rested from his professional labours. His name endures in the Smith Institute, Stirling, which was built by him and endowed and filled with splendid works, many of the pictures being the accomplishment of his own hand. He was a native of that historical city.

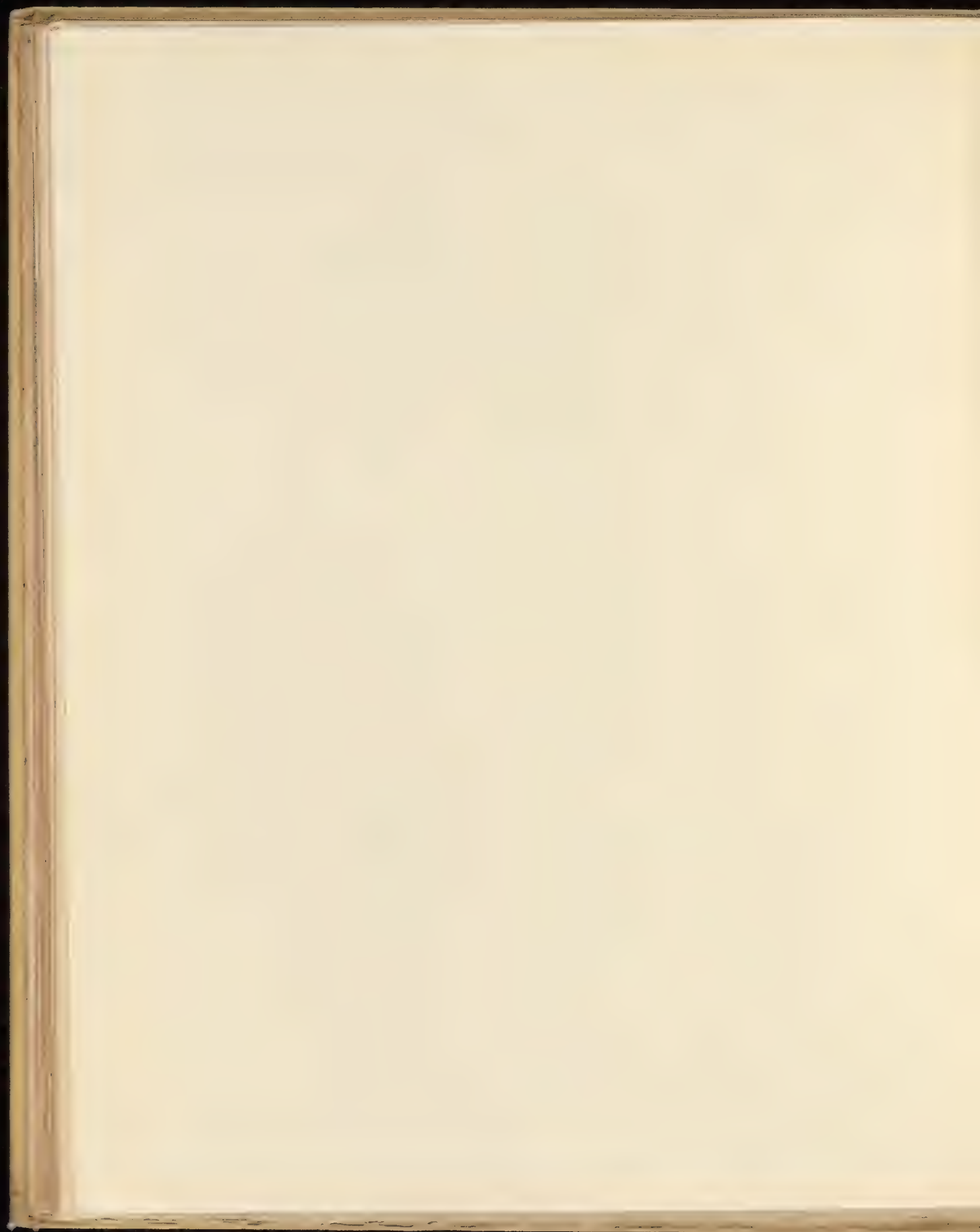
Mr. Orrock, collector of pictures and drawings from his youth, and one who was daily adding to his knowledge and experience as a connoisseur, naturally turned opportunities for acquiring examples of English water-colour art, which Nottingham and the neighbourhood afforded, to fortunate account. In point of fact, the Orrock Collection was founded at Nottingham. Specimens of Hunt and Cox (especially the oil pictures of Cox, which had yet to be appreciated by "the general"), with Copley Fielding, Cattermole, De Wint, John Varley, John Linnell, and Henry Dawson (of whom more anon), gradually appeared on Mr. Orrock's walls. He made the acquaintance of a kindred spirit in Mr. William Lockwood, a generous and discriminative patron of English art, and one of the earliest collectors of the English furniture upon which the name of Chippendale—with a lack of differentiation that does injustice to other masters in the craft—has been popularly placed. Other local collectors and he naturally foregathered. He became "privileged" all over the country as a sketcher. Every picturesque park and demesne was open to him. It was in Nottingham, too, that he became one of Mr. Ruskin's adherents. A paper which he read on the eloquent preacher of the gospel of Turner, to the members of the Friday Society, would have been published if the modesty of the essayist could have been overcome. It was in Nottingham that Mr. Orrock had his admiration of Bonington intensified, and it was there





James Dorn, &

LEICESTER. (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH.) 1872







*Francis, and Margaret of Navarre.*



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he formed those views of that extraordinary artist which have since taken shape in the following exposition :—

“Richard Parkes Bonington, who was probably the youngest English artist whose achievement gives him an indisputable claim to the exalted title of genius, died at the age of twenty-seven. He was born in 1801 at Arnold, a village near Nottingham. His father was an artist, but the irregularities of his life compelled the family to remove from Nottingham, and circumstances led to his settling in Paris. Young Bonington copied pictures at the Louvre and became a student at the Institute, subsequently working in the atelier of Baron Gros. His improvement was rapid, and he gained the gold medal in Paris for one of his marine subjects. In 1822 he went to Italy. He had already gained a reputation in Paris, although he was unknown in England. In 1826 he exhibited at the British Institution two views on the French coast, which gave him at once a name in London. After an attack of sunstroke he fell into a rapid consumption, and died in 1828.

“Bonington had such a marked and powerful individuality, that it influenced that branch of our art which was formed by Holland, Stanfield, Harding, Leitch, and other painters of that well-defined group. There was one other man, however, a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, named Ewbank, whose works, although still in obscurity, have a reputation amongst the cognoscenti which places him close to Bonington. Ewbank's pictures are so beautiful that they are frequently sold as the work of Bonington. Indeed, their distinctive individuality can only be detected by the lynx-eyed connoisseur. It is said that Bonington went to Brittany in consequence of a disagreement with Baron Gros, and there painted that multitude of charming pictures which astonished the art world. His prolific pencil was the outcome of incessant labour and careful study, founded, like the work of all great masters, on complete facility in point-drawing and the manipulation of the materials with which he had to deal. His marvellous skill and rapidity as a pencil draughtsman enabled him to seize the character of every incident relating to landscape and seascape

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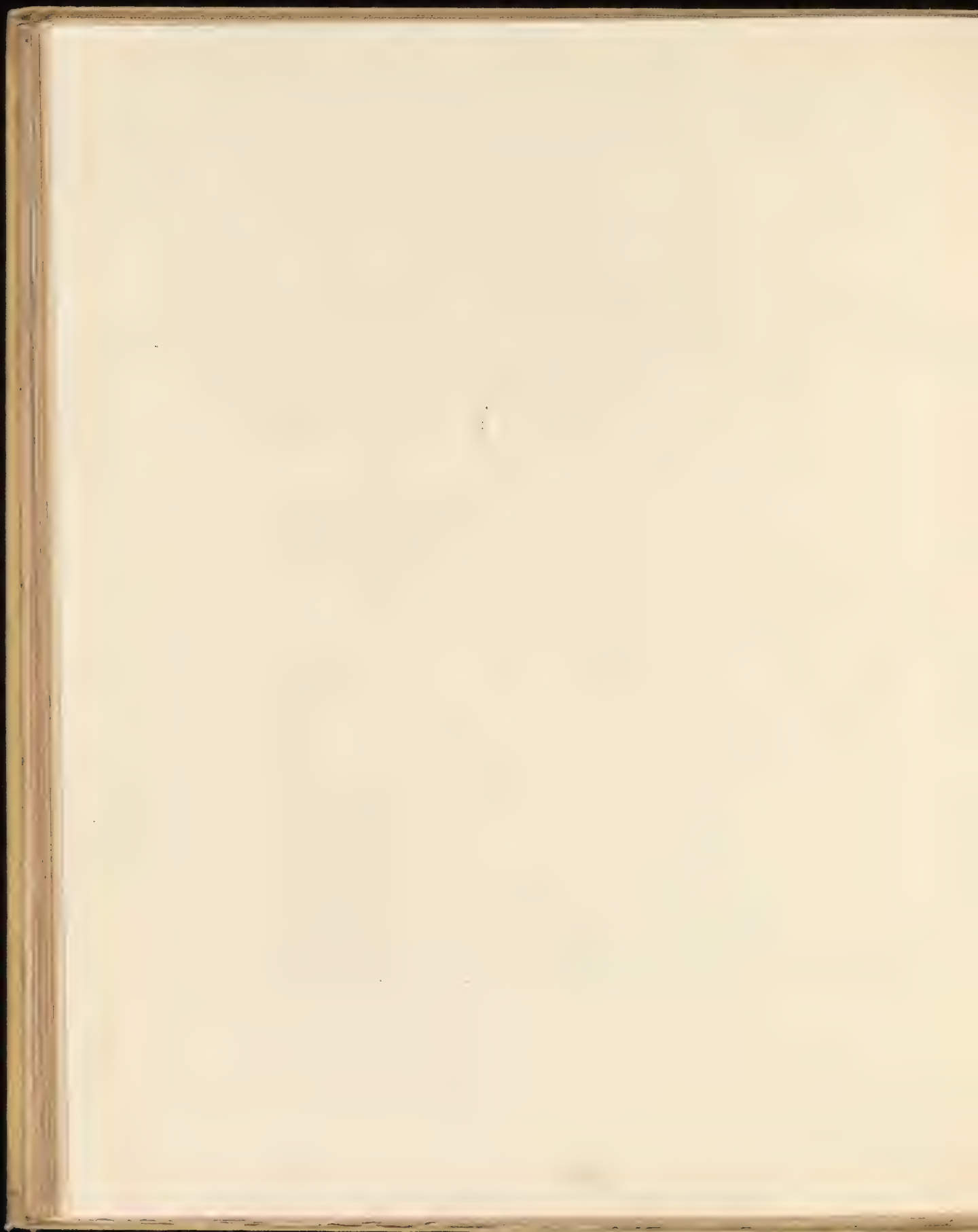
painting. He had a prodigious knowledge of cloud-forms, and his power of expressing space, light, and gradation was only excelled by that of Turner himself. In this particular excellence he stood before Müller, Fielding, and Barret, and took his seat next to Turner.

"What is remarkable about this young man is the fact that, although he lived so long among the French, he was and remained English in his art, just as English as if he had never crossed the Channel. He was peculiarly elegant and graceful as a composer, and he therefore was in the procession with Gainsborough, Turner, Wilkie, and Landseer. This merit the English may claim above all other nations. There are exceptions, but they are rare. Watteau, a Frenchman, represents one. No Dutch art, however perfect it may be in technique, colour, and so forth, can, in beauty of line and balance of parts, live in the presence of this instinctively expressed English feeling for grace and elegance of artistic construction. In addition to his power as a landscape painter, the boy Bonington was a first-rate *genre* figure painter. Indeed, no landscape painter, old or young, was ever so gifted with the dual talent. Some of the best of his figure pictures are in the Wallace Collection, which was lately bequeathed to the nation. 'Francis the First and Marguerite de Valois' is one of his finest. He painted this subject, although of course each one shows somewhat different treatment, no fewer than three times. One is in the Louvre, another is in the Wallace Collection, and the third I have the honour of possessing.

"Of all the direct or 'first intention' painters, Bonington stands first. If he had not painted with the rapidity of lightning, and expressed his meaning at once, how could he have produced the multitude of pictures and drawings—to be found everywhere—which he accomplished within his life of twenty-seven years. Müller and Morland and Romney were in this respect behind him. The Francis the First picture, for example, which I know so intimately, and which is composed of two figures, with dogs and accessories and the interior of an apartment, was doubtless painted 'at a blow,'



THE DINING-ROOM





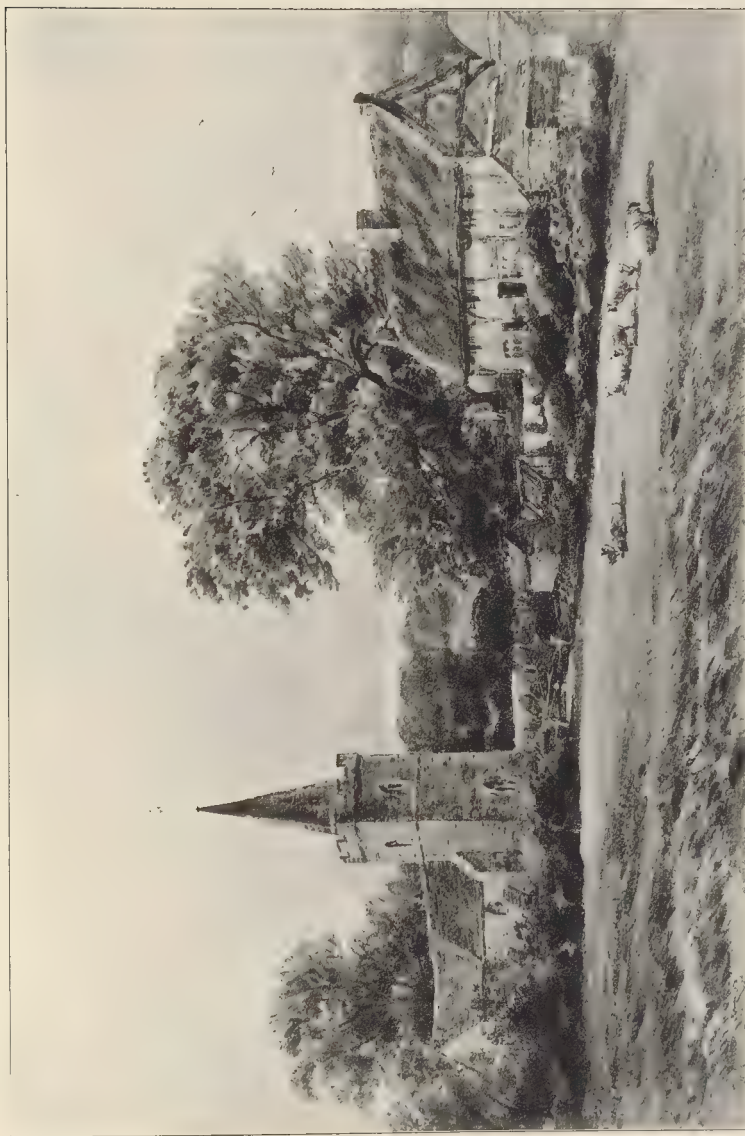
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because the flowing character of the colour allows of no patchwork or second painting. This quality, with the evidence of speed, is of course only manifest to the practical man. Bonington was not only a consummate draughtsman and manipulator of mediums and colours, he was also a colourist of the highest rank. He possessed a peculiarly sweet, limpid quality, always in tone, tune, and harmony, which emanated from his own sunny nature. He is one of the few English artists whose works are prized in France, although, as I have said in other words, he expressed himself with his own pure English art accent. It is to be hoped that before long there may be some worthy examples of this boy-master acquired for the National Gallery—pictures and drawings that will afford his countrymen opportunities of supporting the verdict of the French judges. Bonington had a fine nature and a kind heart, and he possessed, moreover, a manly and handsome presence."

The sketcher from nature, whether he take his solitary way, like Turner, or form one of a choice companionship, like Cox, engages himself in an enviable pursuit. It is healthful, invigorating, restorative. While it strengthens and revivifies the body, it purifies and enriches the mind. The man becomes a boy again in the presence of the kindly face of Mother Nature. The fields are as spaciouly, invitingly sweet to him, the silence of the moors is as soothing, the woods are as solemn, and the skies as wondrous as they were before the business of life found him, not without an irksome sense of captivity, "in populous city pent." He has escaped from the clubs and the cliques, and he feels like an enlarged prisoner with his freedom in his hands. Wars and rumours of wars trouble him no more. Political parties may contend with patriotic ferocity, but what cares he? The occupation day by day yields its harvest of beauty. As he examines his sketch before putting it away, he experiences the unspeakable content which only comes to him who has done a good, honest, soulful day's work. How he enjoys his simple meal, especially if it be shared with one or two sympathetic comrades!

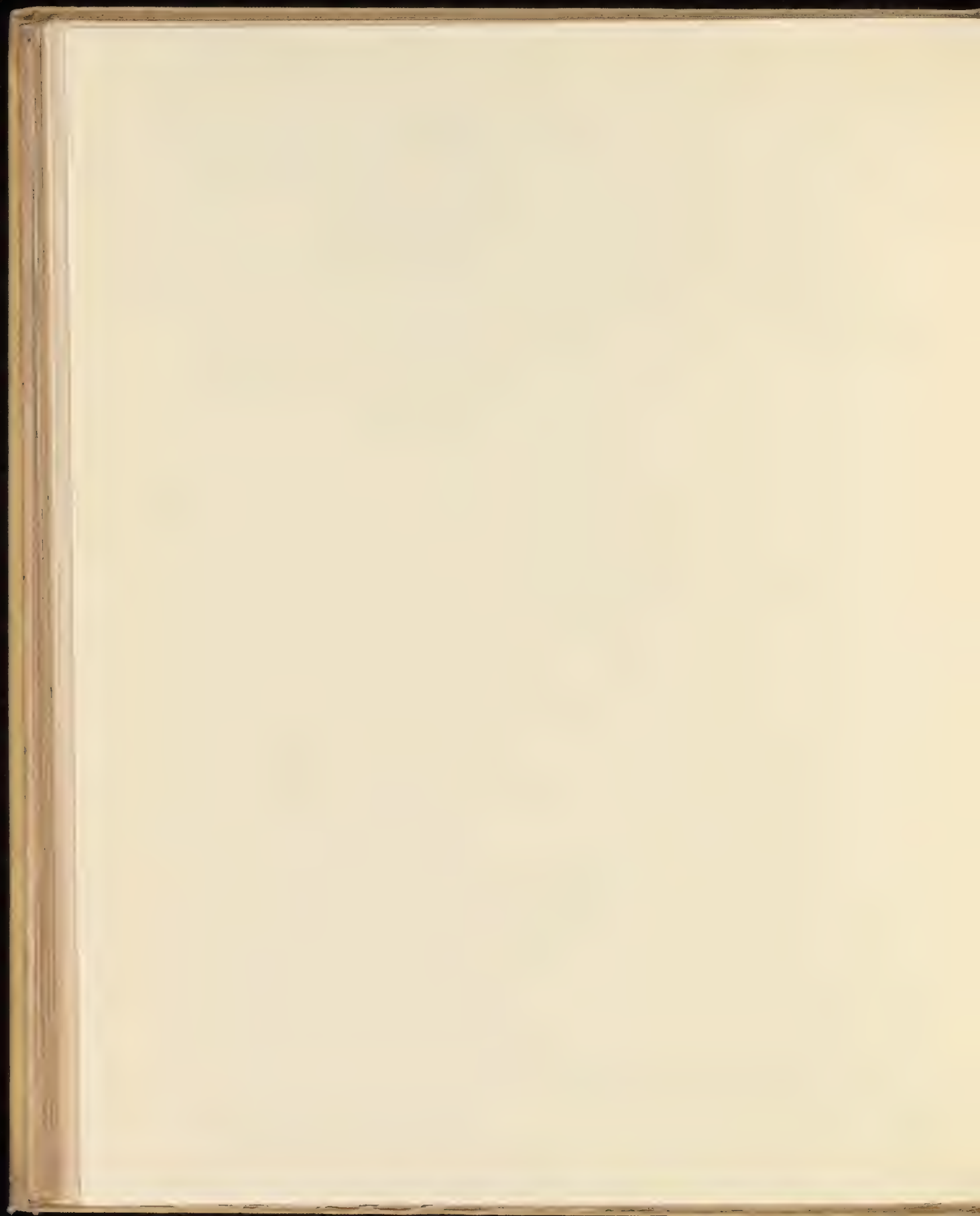
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It may be said of the brotherhood of landscape painters that they are not deficient in a sense of humour. Charles Keene, who was a rare delineator of rusticity in every form, and who put landscapes into black-and-white that were at once faithful to nature, brilliant, and full of colour, *was* a humorist, of course. 'Twas his vocation, Hal! Mr. Phil May, too, feels landscape, and expresses it in a manner that proves how great he might be in that field of art if he chose to devote himself exclusively to its delineation—which, Heaven forbid! But that many landscape men possess the George Eliot appreciation of humour, the stories which they tell of their tranquil adventures during a sketching excursion pleasantly testify. Mr. Orrock is distinctly one of the happy number. The comic side of life tickles him. He is alert to its manifestation. And, on those sketching excursions, whether it comes to him in candid and unsolicited criticism bestowed on his efforts while he is at work, or is unconsciously contributed in the after-dinner period by the rustics with whom he and his comrades of the brush delight to study in the common room of their cosy country tavern, it is alike welcome. At times members of the company, locally famous for the gift of minstrelsy, will burst into song. And, as to Leicestershire and Notts, the two shires where Mr. Orrock first made his sketching expeditions, they were not only remarkable for their singers of folk-songs in the rural districts, but they had their traditions of former minstrels that were pleasant to hear. There is no record of a landscape painter who was also a musician (as Mr. Orrock is) turning those sketching excursions to account by collecting the folk-songs which tasted of mead or nut-brown ale, or smelt of hawthorn blossom and the flowering bean; but the painters relished the ditties, and occasionally noted them for personal repetition. The late H. S. Marks had more than one of the songs of rural life in his racy collection. And now, having in fancy heard, say, "I am a Poor Shepherd Undone" and "Phillis on the New-Mown Hay," let us join Mr. Orrock on a particular sketching expedition that was not made musical by rustic



James O. 1870

NEWTOWN, LINFORD, LINCESTERSHIRE. (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH.) 1870.





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vocables. It had another and perchance a merrier reason to be remembered.

On the outskirts of the Sherwood Forest, in North Nottinghamshire, nestles the pleasant village of Edwinstone, one of the traditional haunts of bold Robin Hood. It was Mr. Orrock's frequent custom to paint thereabouts, in "the merry greenwood," in company with a Nottingham friend, who was a congenial artist. They put up at the village inn, the "Royal Oak," which was kept by a jolly specimen of the British landlord named Turtle, who in diameter and circumference was whimsically considered to be not unlike a well-grown chelonian. On the occasion of one of their visits Mr. Orrock and his comrade adjourned after dinner to the bar-parlour to enjoy the songs and tales of the rustics. It chanced, however, that on that particular evening the attention of the company was absorbed in a discussion of the merits and magnitude of a certain pig, the property of the landlord, that had been fattened into mighty and, Mr. Turtle avowed, unheard-of proportions on his own premises. The proud owner declared that the animal was not only the biggest pig in the county, but that the porker for size could challenge all England. The two painters asked Mr. Turtle, on retiring, if he would be kind enough to show them this wondrous creature. The landlord cheerfully consented, and it was agreed that the inspection should take place on the following morning after breakfast. At the appointed hour a reception was held, the company, including the landlord, Mr. Orrock, and his friend, repairing with a gravity becoming the occasion to the abode of the pig. They were admitted into a cattle-yard, at the end of which stood a shed containing the interesting quadruped. After an interval devoted to stirring up and coaxing the animal out of its lair, the spectators were favoured with the sight of a hog monstrous enough to have made the fortune of a travelling show. Mr. Orrock looked and looked, wondered, and began to fear that he might be suffering from defective vision. As far as he could see and make any comparison, the pig appeared to be about the size of an old-fashioned

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kitchen-dresser. But there was really no comparison to be made. To relieve his eyes and calm his nerves, he returned to the gate at the entrance of the yard and looked over it, restored by a contemplation of the magnificent forest beyond, at that moment bathed in the light of the summer morning. Presently Mr. Turtle joined him, and said, with some asperity, "Mr. Jorrox! What game are you up to?" "Oh, Mr. Turtle," was the persuasive reply, "I am enjoying the lovely scene before me, and breathing this delicious forest air." "Yes, yes, Mr. Jorrox, that is all very well. But what about my pig?" "Well, now, Mr. Turtle, I frankly confess that I am no judge of pigs. But tell me now, between ourselves, you know, do you really consider *that* a large pig?" "What is that you are saying, Mr. Jorrox?" Mr. Orrock rejoined, in a blandly conciliatory manner, "Do you really, now—tell me in confidence, for we are old acquaintances, Mr. Turtle—do you honestly consider that a large pig?" "Well, I *am* ——!" exclaimed the landlord; adding, when he had recovered his powers of objurgation, "you are, Mr. Jorrox, the most hignorant hass I ever saw." During the remainder of their stay at the "Royal Oak" Mr. Turtle treated Mr. Orrock and his friend with silent, but, under the painful circumstances, not unnatural contempt. They met on subsequent visits, but Mr. Turtle never forgave Mr. Jorrox his incapacity to appreciate the mammoth pig.

### CHAPTER III

Henry Dawson—Birth and Beginnings—A “twist hand” in a lace manufactory and a painter—Mr. Roberts, the Nottingham barber and Dawson’s first patron—Prices—Mr. Orrock discovers Dawson’s genius—Dawson’s friend and patron, Wilde, keeper of the Trent Lock—Mr. Orrock’s meeting with Dawson—“How are you to-day, sir?”—Commissions—Estimate—Method—A huckstering patron—Treatment by the Royal Academy—“Only one vote”—Advancement notwithstanding the R.A.—Henry Dawson in water-colours—Mr. Roberts and his bottle of physic—The other “cracked” patron exhibited for half-a-crown—“The Wooden Walls”—Dawson’s own opinion of the picture—“Give us a roll”—An appalling escape—Dawson and the admonitory palette.

IT was at Nottingham, when he was in practice there, that Mr. Orrock first saw the pictures of Henry Dawson, then struggling for a livelihood at Chertsey, and was stirred to love the man, while cherishing unbounded belief in the genius and future of the painter. Henry Dawson, like so many of the masters in the English School of painting, sprang from the people. His lot had a likeness to that of William Etty, inasmuch as he had toiled at a handicraft before he became a painter. Otherwise, the circumstances of the two men were widely dissimilar. While Etty was afforded instruction, and means provided to enable him to pursue his studies when he had done with his trade—at which he never wrought a single hour after his seven years’ apprenticeship—Dawson had to fight on and acquire a mastery of the Art alone and unaided. He painted worthy pictures long before he felt that he could conscientiously relinquish the humble calling which had provided him and his numerous family with “a stand-by.” If ever, within or without Dr. Smiles’s group of examples, there was a self-made man, Henry Dawson was one.

Jersey lays claim to John Everett Millais, although he was born in Southampton. The Channel separates his accidental

## James Orrock

birthplace from the home of his family and the island in which he spent his boyhood. Nottingham claims Henry Dawson—along with Paul Sandby and his brother and Richard Parkes Bonington—although he was born at Hull, the town in which Etty served his apprenticeship as a letterpress printer. Had Etty been Dawson's contemporary in Art he would no doubt have disputed the claim of Nottingham, since "the English Titian"<sup>1</sup> was "Yorkshire out-and-out" in his championship of his native shire, and never happier than when he was glorifying the famous artists and other celebrities which the broad acres had produced. He was, for that matter, proud to include Stothard in the number, although Stothard was only "of Yorkshire descent."

Henry Dawson was born in 1811. His parents had removed to Hull from Nottingham a year before his birth, and when the child was a year old they returned to the latter town. He, his birthplace notwithstanding, always called himself a Nottingham man. At an early age he was sent to work at the lace machine, and, until he was thirty, "he had," to quote the words of one of his warmest admirers,<sup>2</sup> "to steal time from his daily work to feed the cravings of his genius." Dawson began, like many another untaught, unschooled painter, by painting pictures from engravings. The young artist who perceives the right relations of colour in a black-and-white transcript of a painting is instinctively or by his divination a colourist. Instances might be given of painters who have copied prints, the originals of which they never saw, that were in colour astonishingly like the master's work. But, as will be gathered when we come to Mr. Orrock's account of his friend, there was another influence at work with Henry Dawson when he went to Nature. Lessons in perspective<sup>3</sup> and the like

<sup>1</sup> The epithet applied to him by Charles Reade.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Richard Smith, of Sheffield, in the *Nottingham Guardian*.

<sup>3</sup> "Turner, though he was professor of Perspective to the Royal Academy, did not know what he professed, and never, so far as I remember, drew a single building in true perspective in his life; he drew them only with as much perspective as suited him. . . . The student should treat perspective with common civility, but pay no court to it."—MR. RUSKIN.

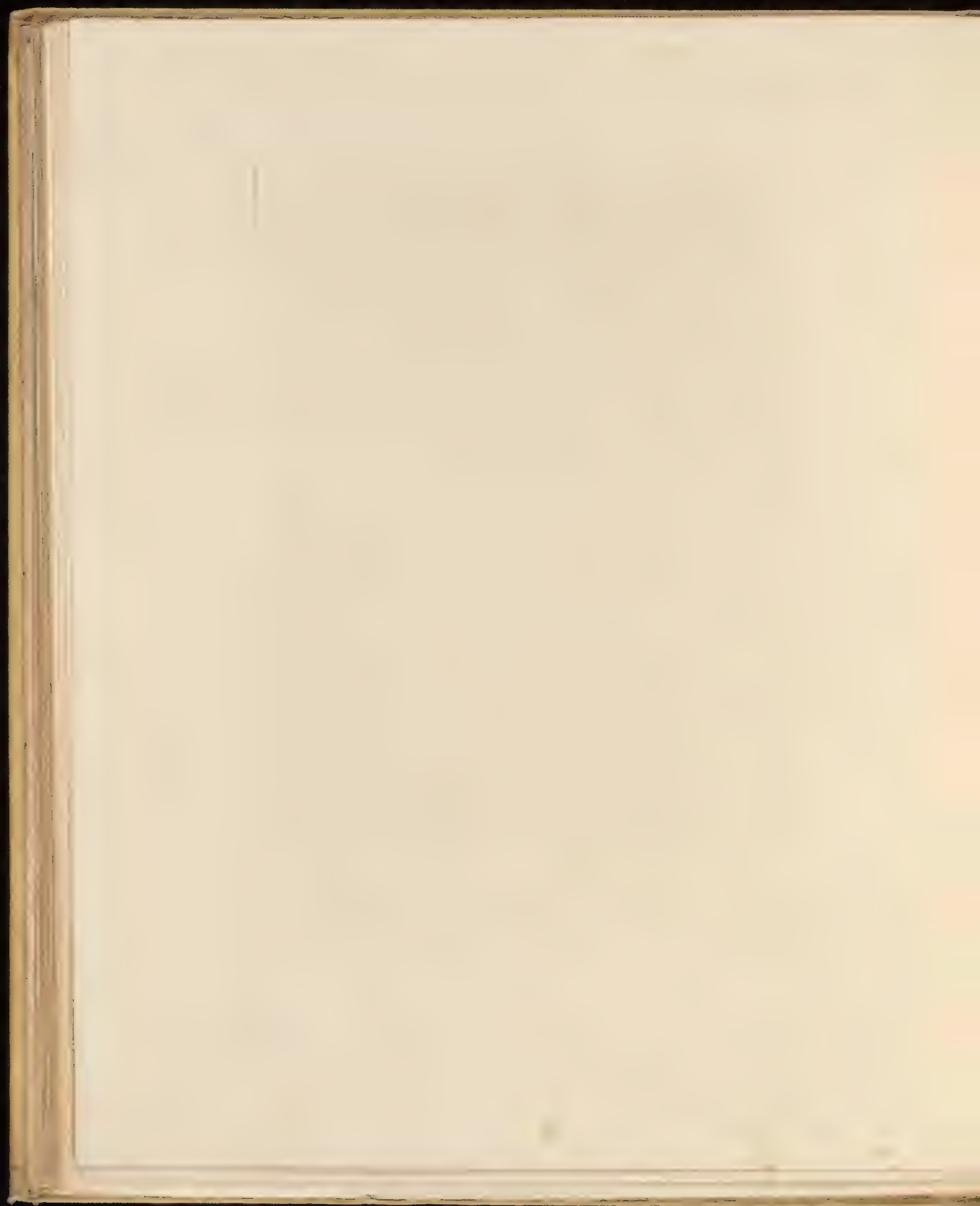




Aug 25. 1861. P. M. A. 1861.

At 10. 1861. 1861.

*Yes or No?*



## *James Orrock*

he never had. He grasped, he instantly saw through rules, and he applied them unconsciously, impelled and enlightened by the natural force and fire of his genius. He acquired the power of knowledge by a succession of short cuts, because it was in him to do so. This is the way of many great painters.

One is reminded for a moment of the barber in Maiden Lane and his marvellous son, on learning that the first patron who gave Henry Dawson encouragement was "Mr. Roberts, hairdresser, Nottingham." Mr. Roberts did more. He bought Dawson's pictures. It is true the prices were small, ridiculously small; but then, so were the sums paid to Turner for his earliest drawings. It was the hairdresser (of whom we shall hear more from Mr. Orrock) who urged Dawson to give up his employment at the lace factory and devote himself exclusively to painting. Mr. Barber, a portrait painter of more than local repute, offered the same advice, after seeing but a couple of Dawson's pictures. At last, on a change occurring in the process of lace-making, which appeared to portend less wages to the "twist hand," Dawson took heart of grace to abandon "the mill" altogether, and rely for a livelihood on art. It is related, in testimony to the loyalty of Mr. Roberts, that that steadfast supporter of Henry Dawson bought the first picture which the artist painted as "a professional," for which he paid him the prodigious sum of twenty shillings, "and no discount for ready money!" Dawson was on the verge of thirty years of age when he burnt his boats.

At a *Conversazione* of the Nottingham School of Art, where there was a Loan Exhibition of pictures and other works, Mr. Orrock first saw a painting by Henry Dawson. Accosting Mr. F. Fussell, the Art Master, he asked the name of the artist. Mr. Fussell replied that he did not know, and added that he did not think much of it. Rejoined Mr. Orrock, "I do." At that moment a young man came forward and introduced himself. He said he was glad to hear that Mr. Orrock admired the work of Henry Dawson, who was a friend of his and of his father. He

## *James Orrock*

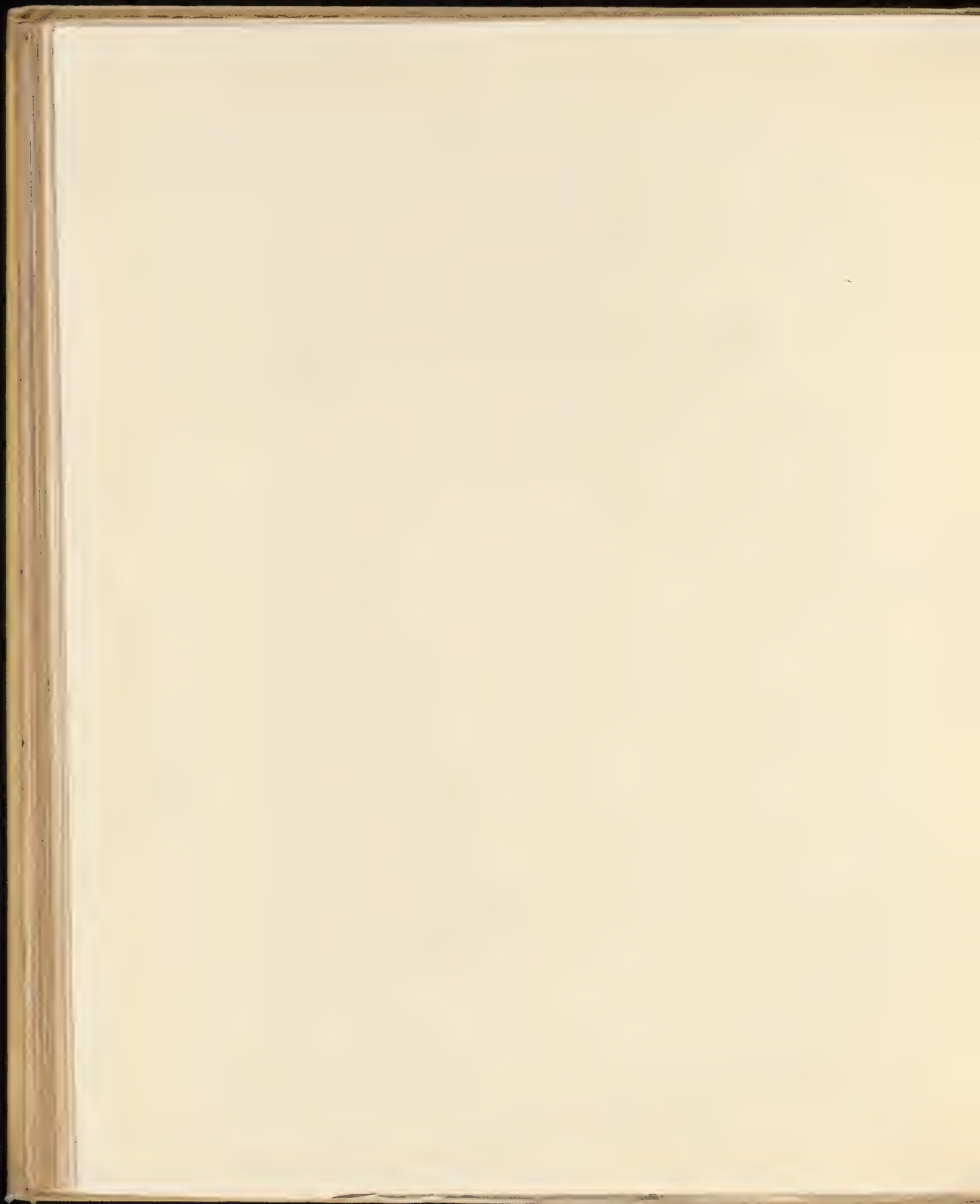
asked Mr. Orrock if he would like to look at another of Dawson's pictures which was in a different part of the Exhibition? Mr. Orrock, whose interest on a further inspection of the picture which had first arrested his attention was keenly aroused, answered in the affirmative, and on seeing his second work he exclaimed in a tone of earnest conviction, "This is a great English painter!" The young man, whose name was Wilde, was delighted. He informed Mr. Orrock that his father, who occupied the position of Keeper of the Trent Lock, possessed several pictures by Henry Dawson; would Mr. Orrock like to see them? The reply was again "Yes," and an appointment was made for the following Sunday. The engagement was duly kept, and the visitor was warmly welcomed by Mr. Wilde the elder, who was a simple-mannered earnest man, and enthusiastic concerning his friend Henry Dawson and Dawson's genius. The house at the Trent Lock, an abode of a quaintly primitive description, might have been termed the shrine of painters of some of the most beautiful pictures in the English Landscape School. Dawson was in the habit of staying at the Lock in the autumn with his friends the Wildes, and he painted there. The Lock is a picturesque spot on the silver Trent. Thence you can perceive Colwick Hall, which belonged to the Musters family. The park is grandly timbered, and has for a background Colwick Wood. The landscape opens up the beautiful Trent valley on to Newark, Southwell, and Lincoln. It is part of "De Wint's country."

There were as many as half-a-dozen examples of Henry Dawson's art in Mr. Wilde's little room. The proud possessor asked his visitor what he thought of them? Mr. Orrock replied that "they were as pure and as luminous as fine water-colours, and as rich and full as 'a Dutchman.'" The owner in his enthusiasm exclaimed, "Mr. Orrock, shake hands!" The meeting enchanted him. Being himself an intelligent amateur artist, he thoroughly understood and appreciated the genius of his friend, and he promised Mr. Orrock that during Dawson's next visit they





WEST WALL OF DINING-ROOM  
With Turner's "Walton Bridges" and "Newark Abbey on the Wey," and Reynolds' "Venus disarming Cupid"



## James Orrock

would call on his new admirer, at his residence in Park Street, Nottingham.

Autumn came round, and brought Dawson, with his introducer, to Mr. Orrock's. In describing the meeting, which he regards as a memorable occurrence, Mr. Orrock says, "I beheld a slight figure about the middle height, with a beautifully modelled head and a face the expression of which displayed firmness combined with modesty. His eyes were soft but piercing, and he seemed in one swift and comprehensive glance to take in every picture on the walls. The chief of those paintings were by Linnell, and by David Cox in oil. On being briefly introduced by Mr. Wilde, the simple-minded artist stepped forward, and stretching forth his hand said, as if we had known each other for years, 'And how do you do to-day, Mr. Orrock?' I replied that I was quite well, and excessively pleased to see him—which I certainly was, for already I felt the charm of his unaffected originality. He said, 'I was very glad to come, because I understand you appreciate my pictures.' I said I did, and I thought some of his skies were as fine as those by any master. He rejoined, with warmth and delicious simplicity—you missed the egotism of the remark—indeed, it did not seem egotistic—'You are quite right, sir. *They are!*' During this time he was playing with a brass watch-key which hung upon a black riband that was attached to his watch. I drew his more particular attention to the pictures which hung upon my walls. 'These,' I said, 'are by David Cox, and these by John Linnell.' He said that he liked the Linnells very much, but he thought the Coxes were daubs. Dawson's candour was refreshing. I expressed a desire to possess one of his pictures, and he said he would be glad to paint me one, but what was the subject to be? I told him I admired his grey colour exceedingly, and should therefore like him to paint me a grey picture. He asked me to name the subject. 'Mr. Dawson,' I rejoined, 'I will leave the subject entirely to yourself, for I am convinced that if you are let alone you will produce an artistic work.' He replied, with

## James Orrock

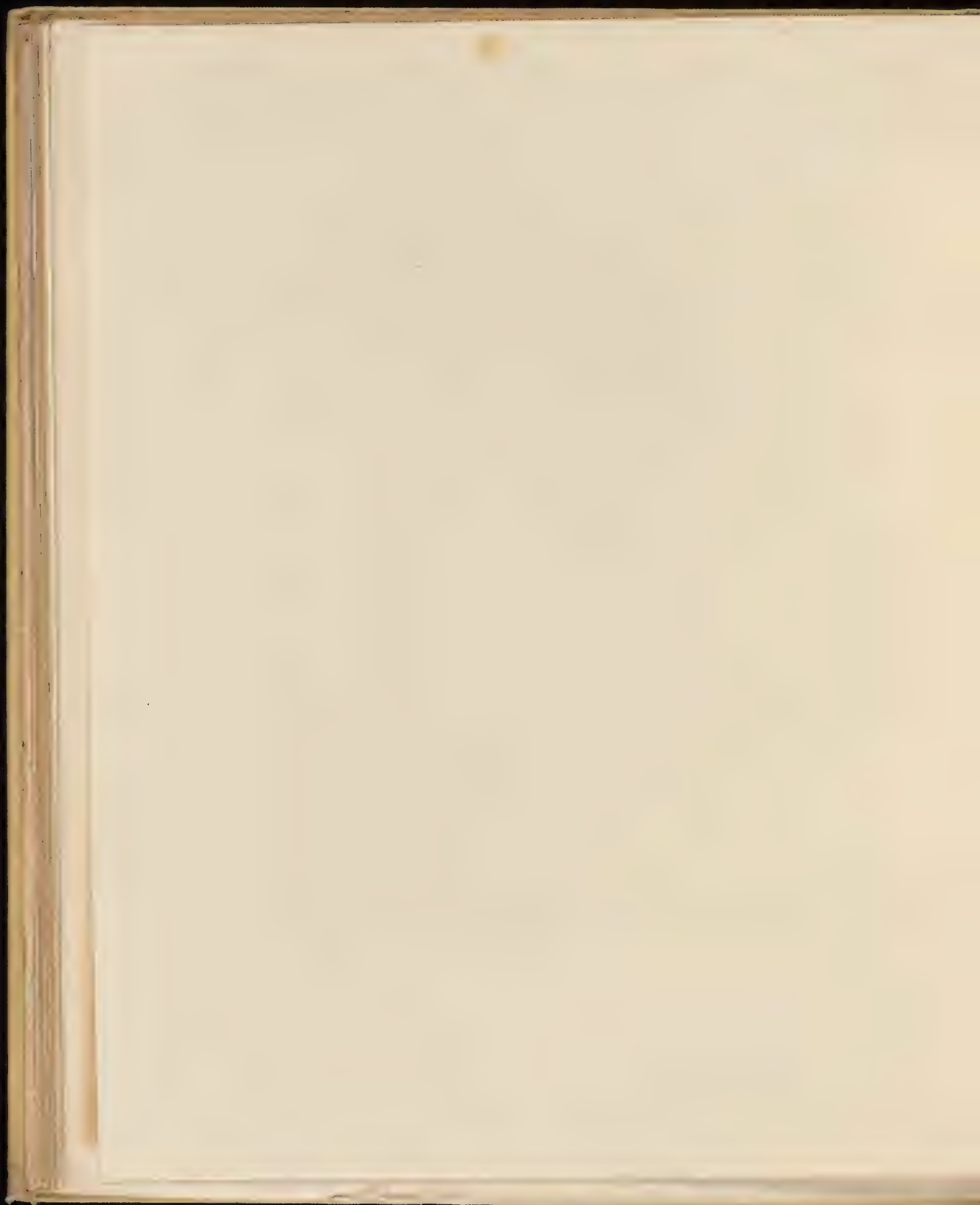
the utmost gravity, 'I am pleased to have the opportunity of painting a grey picture, because, just now, my eyes are gorged with a yellow sunset in an eight-foot picture of the Houses of Parliament which I am painting for Lady Ossington.' This was, to the best of my recollection, in the year 1857. I was away in Wales when my picture came home and it was received by Mrs. Orrock. She wrote to Dawson expressing the pleasure which the work had given her, and, while disclaiming any special knowledge of the Art, said she was sure her husband would share her delight. I did. I hung the picture between a Linnell and a Cox, and it stood the test. The picture was the 'Rain Cloud.' The following year Dawson painted me the 'Cumulus Cloud,' and subsequently, 'Waiting for the Tide' (Sunrise), and 'The Hayfield' (Sunset)."

Nothing kindles Mr. Orrock's enthusiasm more readily when the masters of the great English School are in discussion than the mention of Henry Dawson's name. To hear him discourse on the text which the man, the painter, and the painter's achievements supply is to listen to an exponent as sympathetically impregnated with his subject and as strenuous in its exposition as Mr. Ruskin (himself an appreciator of Dawson) ever was when Turner inspired him. Mr. Orrock treats of Dawson's art with well-founded authority. No connoisseur knows it better or has been familiar with it longer. He has seen it grow and branch forth and bear fruit. Of Henry Dawson he says, "He was a splendid point-draughtsman who could draw with vigour and delicacy everything in landscape and seascape art. His knowledge of English shipping, from the line-of-battleship to the Thames or Trent barge, was consummate. No one, not even J. D. Harding, could draw trees more learnedly or more artistically. He made many hundreds of careful studies of cloud-forms in storm and calm, from sunrise to sundown. Gifted with unusual mental power, he carefully thought over and worked out the best methods of expressing purity, force, and delicacy, and above all *chiaroscuro*, like Constable. He was for ever jealous of the depth and transparency of his shade-





*Bantoragh*



## *James Orrock*

painting. His first aim was to preserve the drawing and character of the objects he had to represent; his last, to conserve the glow in the shade. Like old John Varley, Dawson was a man who frequently put a whole volume of insight into an odd phrase when he talked of pictures. He would say, for example, of the works of a clever surface-painter, and an Academician, that 'they lacked undergarments.' In truth, his own pictures are well-clothed, and they tremble and shimmer in their opulent beauty with the infinity of silken colours.

"The simple story of his valiant life is full of incidents that cannot but charm the kindred spirit. When he was a poor man, and struggling on as if he felt the right to work in his own quiet, self-absorbed way a privilege, he 'saved up' to buy ultramarine, of which beloved colour he had, later in life, an astonishing stock, from the full 'true blue' to the various gradations of ultramarine-ash. With a natural aptitude for that branch of science—as he had for mechanics—Dawson made himself, by application and experiment, a practical chemist for the single purpose of 'finding out' the qualities of colours. In time he was enabled to make transparent cadmiums and a variety of madders, while effecting radical improvements in other pigments. His method was to paint, in impasto, in black-and-white, the whole of his subject, when the latter was of any considerable size; thereby securing the drawing, character, and composition of the picture. When completed in this preparatory stage, the work looked like a powerful and brilliant drawing in black-and-white. I once expressed my surprise at this black-and-white force, and wondered how the after-colouring could possibly assert itself. Dawson laughed and said, 'I will show you.' I may remark, however, that the black-and-white impasto pictures were invariably put away for a period of two months to allow the surface to harden; and as everything was drawn and modelled, except, of course, minute details such as the rigging of ships and the finer elaboration of architecture, the painter with a full brush laid on such

## *James Orrock*

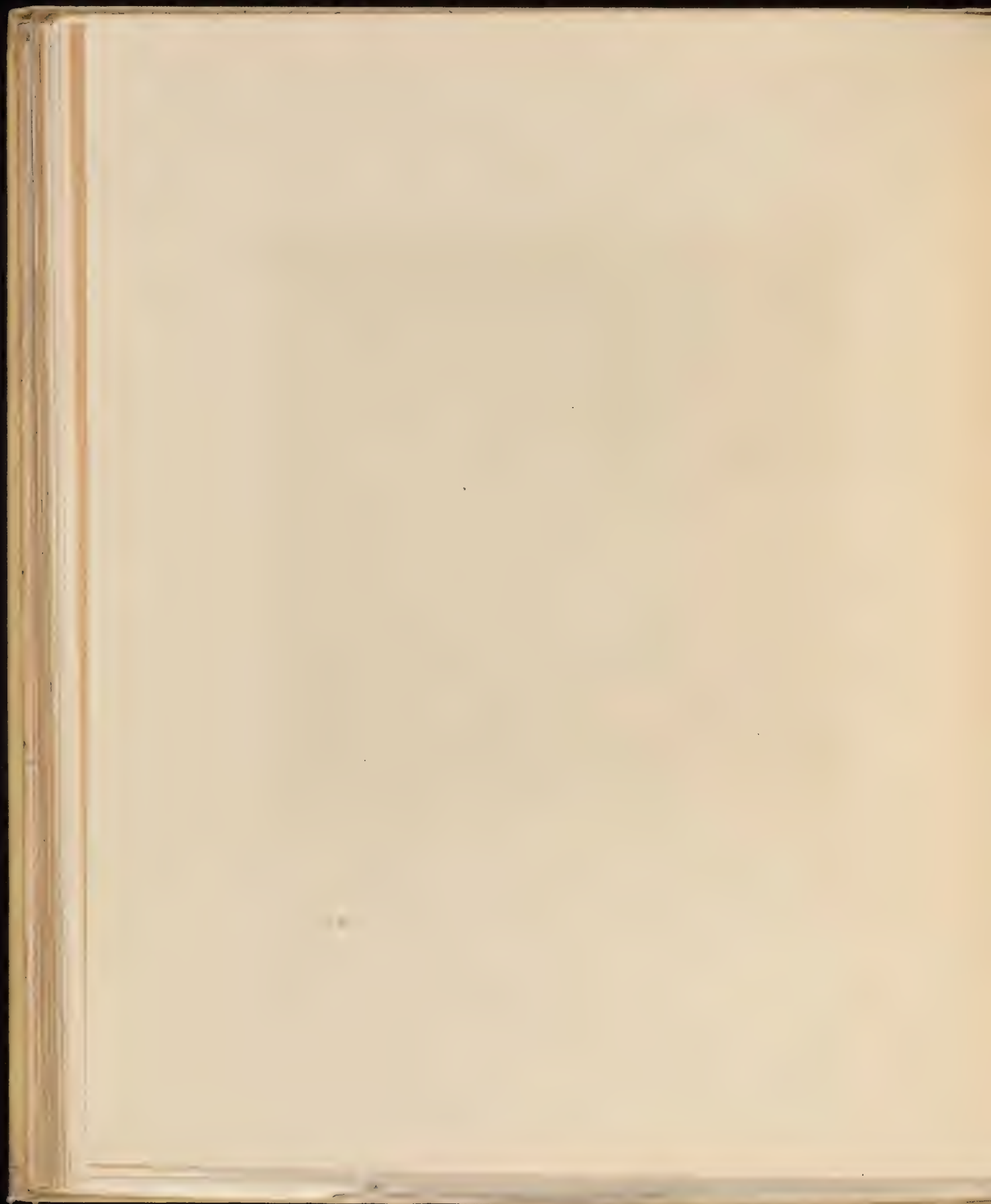
strong colours that the untouched parts became almost like white paper. One of Dawson's artistic features was, therefore, his force, a characteristic of all great colourists. Dawson's mightiest works were produced in early and middle life, and were the efforts of his true spirit, before the dealers drove him to fritter away his breadth and tone to suit the Creswick market. He, like Wilson, Crome, Cotman, Müller, Cox, and other masters, had his place 'below the salt,' while the feeblers occupied the dais. The small-type work which—honest man with a large family—he painted for bread, to the sacrifice of his Art, has done Dawson's reputation deep injury.

"Few painters in our time have lived a more chequered life. Roberts, the Nottingham barber (an acquaintance of my own), to whom Dawson in the early days sold his works, assured me that he has paid him as low a price as ten shillings for a picture. Dawson himself told me that in after-life he had received more than double that amount for signing, and even for looking at, one of those early pictures. For the most remarkable advance from dark to light in Henry Dawson's Art-history the painter was indebted inversely to a rich Nottingham lace manufacturer, a would-be patron of Art, who lived near Kegworth, in Leicestershire. This pompous gentleman commissioned Dawson to paint him four large pictures to decorate his hall and staircase. They were about six feet long and about four feet high, and the price was to be £25 each! They were duly painted within the time specified, and taken to the munificent patron's residence. As it happened, however, the connoisseur—for he posed as one—did not like the landscapes. He, however, offered to take the disparaged goods at a reduced figure. That was his commercial method of being fair as between man and man, and his device for making the best of a bad bargain. The artist, in his anguish, accepted the huckster's reduced offer—he felt at the time he had no other alternative—and the unframed pictures were sent home. They remained in that state. They were considered by their





*Lady Jersey & the Princess Charlotte*



## *James Orrock*

ignorant owner unworthy of frames. They were furthermore hung up, out of the way, in shady places. The time came when two of these grand works were sold for six hundred guineas each.

"It came to pass, also, that Henry Dawson's work was rightly appreciated and warmly praised by the best judges, including Landseer, Creswick, and John Phillip. Phillip, in one of the years he was on the hanging committee of the Royal Academy, placed Dawson's 'Ousely Bells' on the line, the first time Dawson had that honour conferred upon him. He proposed to exchange pictures with Dawson, which was a still greater honour, but he unfortunately died before the arrangement could be effected. Dawson was a grand composer, colourist, and character painter. His views of London, and, indeed, all his Thames subjects, have perhaps never been equalled, much less surpassed. He made his position impelled by a commanding art-instinct when his was the lowly lot of 'a twist hand' in a Nottingham mill, and he advanced it step by step with increasing executive capacity until he stood abreast of the masters of landscape in the English, and therefore in all the schools. With the exception of a few lessons which he had from old Pyne, he taught himself. He formed his own style and was his own master, and yet he never failed to own his indebtedness in those early days to the deep study which he made of some fine old masters, among them Richard Wilson, that were in the possession of his friend, Mr. Cooper, of Sherwood-rise, near Nottingham. He did not copy, he absorbed them. He, it is said, could build a boat or construct a steam-engine. He grew and manufactured his own vegetable colours. He and his sons were learned horticulturists and cunning workers in metals. And he was a fine musician, both in theory and practice. As with Henry Dawson, so, in a modified degree, with his sons. It is doubtful whether there could have been found another family in England that collectively possessed more knowledge of art and science than the Dawsons, with grand old Henry at the head of the household, when they resided at Chiswick. I had the honour and pleasure

## James Orrock

of knowing them intimately for a period of twenty-five years. Dawson felt his place and power in art, and with simple-minded conviction never scrupled to assert himself. In most people that self-appraisal would have conveyed an impression of vanity or conceit. In his case it was beautifully Wordsworthian, and therefore as void of offence, and as unprovocative of contradiction, as the multiplication table. No man had a profounder esteem for the great masters, especially Wilson and Turner, than had Henry Dawson. In the presence of a splendid Turner he would uncover his head with unaffected reverence. I have seen him do it more than once.

"As I have several times said, most of the great English landscape painters painted with first-class skill in water-colours, as well as in oil. Henry Dawson was no exception to this rule. He was as original in this medium as in the other. He had form, colour, and light to produce, and his methods of attaining his object were as simple as possible. He knew that light could only be produced by mosaic work on a pure ground, and he painted his colours, after careful drawing, in tone and harmony, on the white paper, and never *troubled* them more. To my mind, he was one of the most original water-colour painters of our school, and chiefly because he knew not the methods of the other masters. He painted his subjects from nature *always* in this medium, and reproduced them in oil. I do not hesitate to say that no man preserved the character of subjects in water-colour better than Dawson, and his tree-drawing especially has never been excelled. A water-colour drawing by Dawson, when hanging among others, looks more brilliant than those which surround it. His sturdy independence of mind and character led him to think and act for himself, which of course resulted in powerfully individual work that not infrequently met with non-appreciation and neglect. I have frequently seen him painting from nature. His method was deliberately slow and full of earnestness, and manifested profound knowledge."





WEST WALL OF MORNING-ROOM



## James Orrock

Henry Dawson, as Mr. Orrock has stated, was like Müller, Crome, Cotman, Linnell, Cox, De Wint, and Holland, and did not belong to the Royal Academy. John Phillip's recognition of him has been mentioned. Phillip proposed him for the Associateship. The seconder was Thomas Creswick. When the day of election arrived Phillip had died and Creswick was on his death-bed. Dawson received one vote, from—to the honour of the voter be it spoken—Richard Ansdell. Mr. Orrock did not content himself with his personal appreciation of Henry Dawson. He sounded the painter's praises wherever he went. Leicester friends of his, who had not previously patronised the arts, bought Dawson's pictures, the advocate was so earnest in the cause, and so persuasively prophetic of the painter's future distinction. In 1865 Mr. Orrock, writing to Dawson in relation to one of those Leicester buyers, who had had to be convinced, said: "He also agreed with me in saying that, after all, the artist *ought* to paint his own impressions, and take his stand as poets, musicians, and writers do. You will be all right, never fear, for your day is coming." In another letter, written in the same year, Mr. Orrock says: "I have put all the persuasion I have at my command into the arguments for the sale of your 'London.'" Again, seer and connoisseur speaking in one voice (remember, this was thirty-seven years ago), Mr. Orrock wrote: "I shall be happy to receive your Academy picture at your convenience. I quite believe it will suit my taste, whatever many people may think. The fact is, that at the present time the authorities have a fashion for bright and pure colours, and care nothing for the lovely delicate and sober hues that nature ever delights in. Colours as bright as the plumage of foreign birds, flowers, and insects, seem the only hues that are asked for. The day will, however, I am persuaded, soon be over with this rage."

If the members of the Royal Academy declined to crown him, while depriving themselves, as in the case of John Linnell, of the distinction he would have conferred on the body, he lived to be

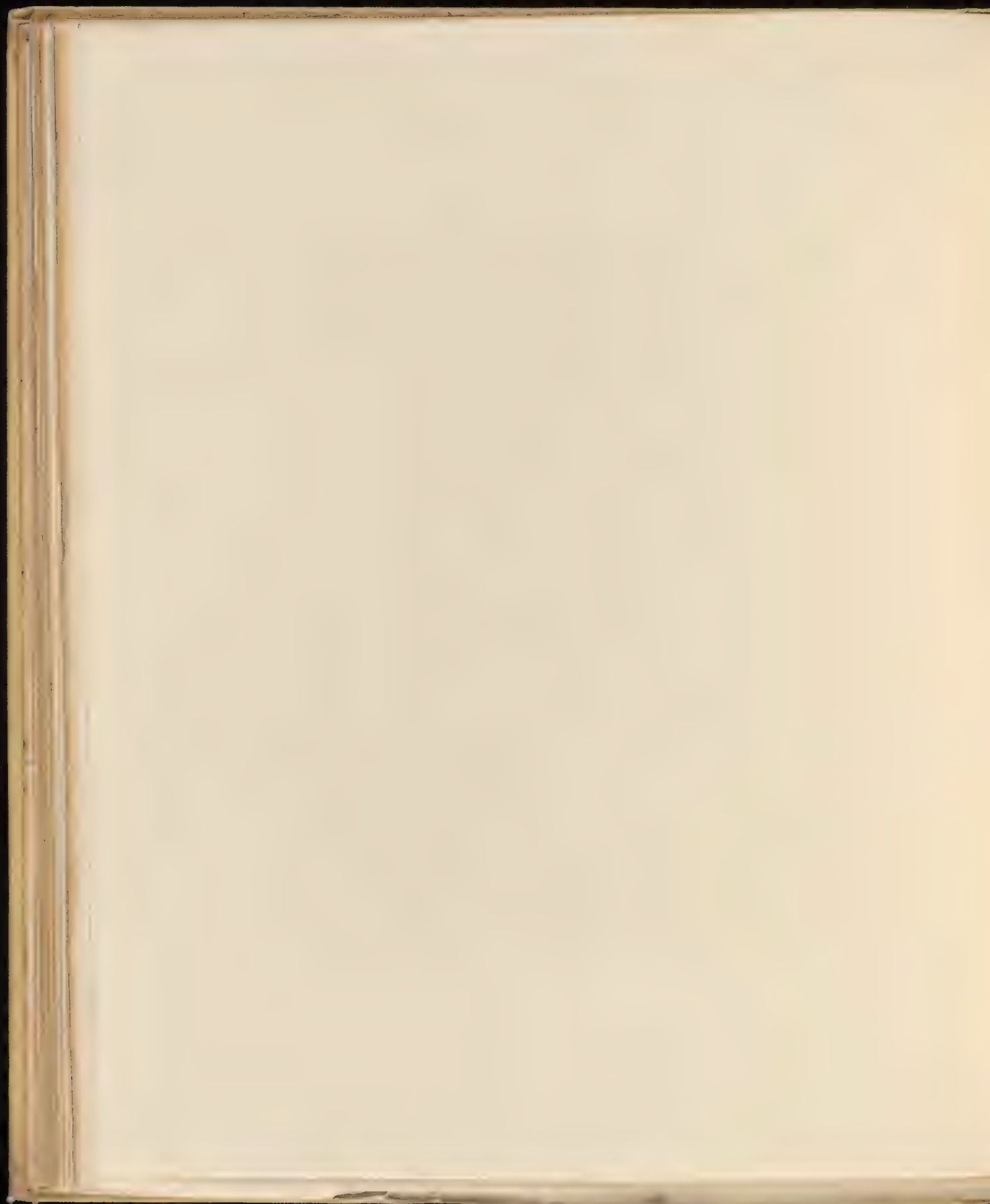
## James Orrock

honoured by Nottingham in a fashion that alike graced city and citizen. Amongst the Art Galleries at Nottingham Castle when that Museum was opened with appropriate pomp and circumstance by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, on July 3, 1878, was one exclusively devoted to pictures painted by Henry Dawson. He was there, simple as ever, yet justly proud of his glorious achievement. Guilds of artists and art-craftsmen would have gathered together in mediæval splendour of garb and pageant to do such a man honour in Germany or in the Netherlands; in France he would have been decorated and orations delivered in his praise. As it happened he stood, surrounded by members of his family, to receive the congratulations of the Prince as his Royal Highness made the round of the galleries, and he was simply, serenely content. He must have felt, "the twist hand," the working-man who had left the lace-mill to become a great painter, that he had not lived and wrought in vain. It is pleasant to think that Mr. Roberts, his earliest, humblest patron, lived to see that day, and that Mr. Orrock was present to witness the splendid culmination of the painter's long and loving labour. "Waiting for the Tide," which had been painted for Mr. Orrock, was one of the attractions of the Dawson gallery. It was pronounced, by one of the critics who dealt with the Exhibition, to be "one of the most beautiful pictures of the kind ever painted." "Wooden Walls," which is in Mr. Orrock's collection, and is reproduced in the present work, the same writer, with excusable and even reasonable enthusiasm, declared to be "one of the finest marine pictures in the world." "Runnymede," "Old Dartmouth Harbour," "The Minute Gun," "The Pool of the Thames" (a picture for which Vicat Cole expressed unbounded admiration, while admitting that "he could never have painted it!"), and his masterpiece, the large "Houses of Parliament," were in the matchless Nottingham collection. The last-named picture was originally exhibited at the British Institution, where it was hung between two Landseers. It first discovered Dawson to a hitherto unknown world, and made a sensation that





*The 'Golden Bells' of Old England.*



## James Orrock

would probably in these days have carried him into the Royal Academy. It was said at the time of the Nottingham Exhibition, and has been repeated since, that Henry Dawson's "Houses of Parliament" ought to have had a place in the national collection. "Landscape in the Dukeries," a grand picture in another line, but one in which the painter was equally master; "Devonport," an equally fine work, for which the artist received a thousand pounds, his highest price; and "St. Paul's," were, with many other representative paintings of landscape and seascape by Dawson, in the gallery which bore his name. We commonly say of the very greatest of our artists that "they could paint anything." The "Old Cromwellian" (a powerful study of his old friend of the Trent Lock, Mr. Wilde), and the portrait of himself in the same gallery, showed that he might have taken a distinguished place in the rare Gainsborough brotherhood if it had pleased him to practise portraiture. The fine colour and quality in both heads revealed the master.

Mr. Orrock had a gossiping acquaintance with Mr. Roberts, the Nottingham hairdresser, who was, as has been mentioned, Henry Dawson's earliest patron. His calling notwithstanding, Mr. Roberts was one of the best connoisseurs of pictures in the town. The country barber, who is a fixture in the place where he practises *his* art—it would not be right to class Figaro with mere tradesmen—is generally a man with a hobby. He is frequently a dog- or bird-fancier, as Dickens observed, and he is not seldom a taxidermist. The late Mr. Bartlett, superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, was originally a hairdresser and bird-stuffer. Mr. Roberts's hobby was pictures. Mr. Roberts was a quaintly shrewd and intelligent fellow, and, in an oddly quiet way, a humourist. The quality of his humour was what the Scotch call "pawky." One day, in a conversation with Mr. Orrock relative to Dawson, he asked him if he had seen the painter's large picture of "Sherwood Forest." Mr. Orrock replied in the negative, but added, naturally, that he should be pleased to be

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afforded the opportunity of inspecting the work. Mr. Roberts said that "Sherwood Forest" was in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Padley, of Bulwell Hall, and as he knew that gentleman very well, the requisite permission to view the picture could be readily obtained. Mr. Padley was parson, squire, and, so far as the poor of his flock were concerned, parish doctor. He had a smattering of medical knowledge which enabled him to physic his unpaying patients for simple maladies, harmlessly, if not to the takers' benefit. Mr. Roberts duly obtained the promised invitation, and together he and Mr. Orrock repaired to the amiable "squarson" of Bulwell Hall. It was a bright summer's afternoon. Mr. Padley showed them not only Dawson's *chef-d'œuvre*, but several other pictures by the same hand. As they were coming away, their gentle-mannered, silver-haired host asked Mr. Roberts tenderly after the state of his health, as a medical man who was also a bosom friend might have done. Mr. Roberts, as a matter of fact, was "never better in his life." However, he replied to Mr. Padley's question by relating, in a low and languid voice, that he had not been quite himself for some time past. Entreating them to wait a few moments, the old gentleman stepped briskly into a side-room, presently returned, and handing Mr. Roberts a neatly-wrapped-up phial, said, "Take that, Mr. Roberts, according to the directions, and it will do you good." Mr. Roberts gravely and emotionally thanked the giver, and Mr. Orrock expressing his acknowledgments of the pleasure which the visit had afforded him, the two pilgrims of art withdrew. The park-like grounds in which the Hall is situated contain a lake. After walking along the side of this piece of water until the Hall disappeared from view, Mr. Roberts suddenly paused, looked around, and finding the landscape unpeopled, took the bottle of medicine from his pocket and threw it as far as he could into the water, exclaiming, "When they drag this pond they will find sixteen more. That is how I take his medicine." On another occasion, when Mr. Orrock dropped in, Mr. Roberts was



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employed upon the half-shorn chin of one of his customers. "Don't go away, Mr. Orrock," he exclaimed, adding to his client—"Excuse me, I want to run out for a few minutes." Whereupon he left the shop. In a short time he returned with a companion, who stood at the door, while the operator re-applied himself to his interrupted task. The new-comer kept his place at the shop door for some moments, regarding Mr. Orrock with curious attention, somewhat to that gentleman's discomfiture. Then he departed. "That is all right," said Mr. Roberts, when the man had gone. "What is all right?" "You saw that man I brought in with me? Well, I was telling him the other day what you thought about Henry Dawson and his pictures. He considers me rather cracked on the subject, and as good as told me so. But you—you, Mr. Orrock! Well, he said he would give me half-a-crown if I would let him have a look at you. I have got the half-crown." "Dawson," relates Mr. Orrock, "frequently came to my house in London when he lived at Chiswick, sometimes with his son Henry, who, like his father, was an accomplished musician, to play in trios and quartettes, in which I myself took an occasional part on the violoncello. It happened at one of those musical evenings that my friend Dr. Bramwell, of Nottingham, was present. The doctor was an excellent musician, and a fairly good amateur artist and judge of pictures. He had a great admiration for Dawson, and few things gave him more pleasure than a conversation with the painter on his art. He never failed to learn something, as everybody did who talked with Dawson, and besides, he loved to draw the old man out. Dawson's 'Wooden Walls of Old England' was hanging in the dining-room, and the following conversation took place between the painter and the doctor concerning the picture:—

"*Bramwell.* 'Do you know, Mr. Dawson, I consider that picture—"The Wooden Walls"—one of the finest marine paintings in the world?'

"*Dawson.* 'You are right, Dr. Bramwell. It is, as you say,

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one of the finest pictures in the world. *I painted it, and I know what it is.*

"*Bramwell.* 'Yet, with all its merits, Mr. Dawson, I have thought perhaps that the line-of-battle ship was rather large for the composition, and the heavy clouds surrounding the setting sun, if I may be allowed to say so, too much accentuated.'

"*Dawson.* 'Do you know, sir, that that is Nelson's flagship, the *Victory*? And let me tell you, Dr. Bramwell, had it not been for the balance of the composition, I would have made that ship twice as big. As for the heavy clouds, I used the weight of them to support the majesty of the *Victory*, as well as to follow in her wake, like the smoke of the guns stained with the blood of the men who for England had, living and dead, done their duty. This is a poem, Dr. Bramwell—a poem, sir—and one day it will be read as such.'

"He spoke as one inspired. His voice deepened and swelled, and his face lit up; and when he ceased, silence fell upon the company. I never heard anything more impressive, or in its grandly simple and heart-searching way more beautiful.

"Henry Dawson was proud of his son Hal, as he habitually called him, and, although all the dear old fellow's geese were swans, his pride in his first-born was well founded. He was a young man of extraordinary powers; a marvellous musician, a skilled working engineer, a boat-builder, an inventor, and an excellent painter. He made, and effected improvements in, lenses, and he was a practical chemist. The father had a sort of defiant belief in his son's musical talents. On the night of the incident just related, when the painter of the 'Wooden Walls' thrilled his auditors with his exposition of that picture, Harry Dawson was present. After several professional musicians had played and sung, the old gentleman became restless, and expressed a wish for Hal to play. I, on my own part, in the spirit of fun, begged him as a favour not to smash the Broadwood Grand. The father, however, was in no mood for raillery. The honour of his son as a

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musician, and that of the Dawson family, awaited vindication. He exclaimed, 'Now, Hal, show them what the Dawsons can do. Never mind the instrument'—regarding the superb Broadwood with no more respect than he would have given to a Jew's harp—'but give us a roll!' The 'roll' was given, and when the final discharge had ceased to reverberate, the entranced father declared that he had been in the seventh heaven of delight.

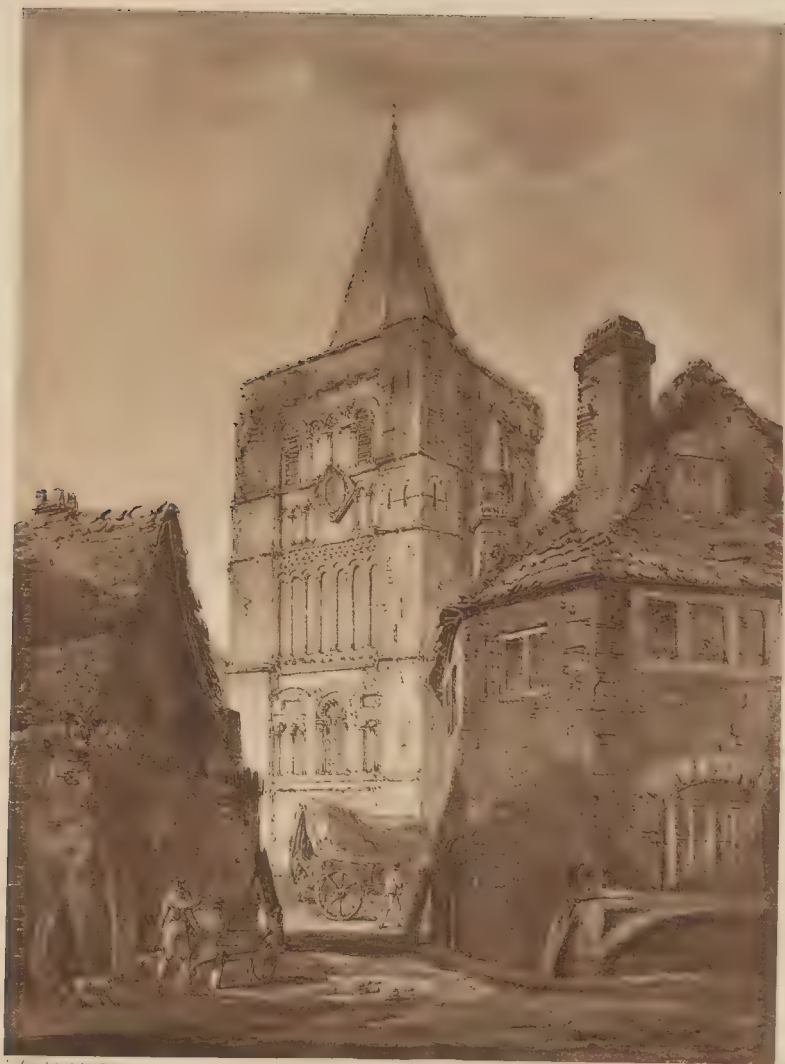
"I am reminded in thinking of his inventive faculty, and its manifold employment, that it once nearly cost him his life. When the family lived in Liverpool they arranged to shut up the house and pay a visit to Nottingham. Henry had as great a dread of burglars as Charles Dickens had of fires. In order to protect his domicile against those nocturnal marauders he placed a number of fire-arms at possible places of entry, in such manner that an enterprising William Sikes who attempted to force a door or a window would stir a trigger and be shot. The contrivance was not put to the test. Neither did any member of the Dawson family suffer injury when on their return the weapons had to be removed. This was surprising. One of the guns that had been used was placed in the studio. A long time after, I believe more than a year, young Harry made his father promise to show him how the lock worked as the piece was discharged. During the period that had elapsed since the gun had been used to automatically protect the habitation against burglars, Dawson had forgotten that it was loaded. In fact, the impression on his mind was that he had withdrawn the charge. His son, persistent as any youngster would be under the circumstances, urged his father to fulfil his promise. He begged him to reveal the mechanism of the gun-lock. Henry, who had finished his day's work at the easel, good-humouredly placed a cap on the nipple, and Harry was told to pull the trigger, while, ever curious in the cause of science, the father placed his cheek to the muzzle to test the force of the air-current in the barrel. Suddenly it occurred to him that the gun might possibly be loaded. He withdrew his face, a loud

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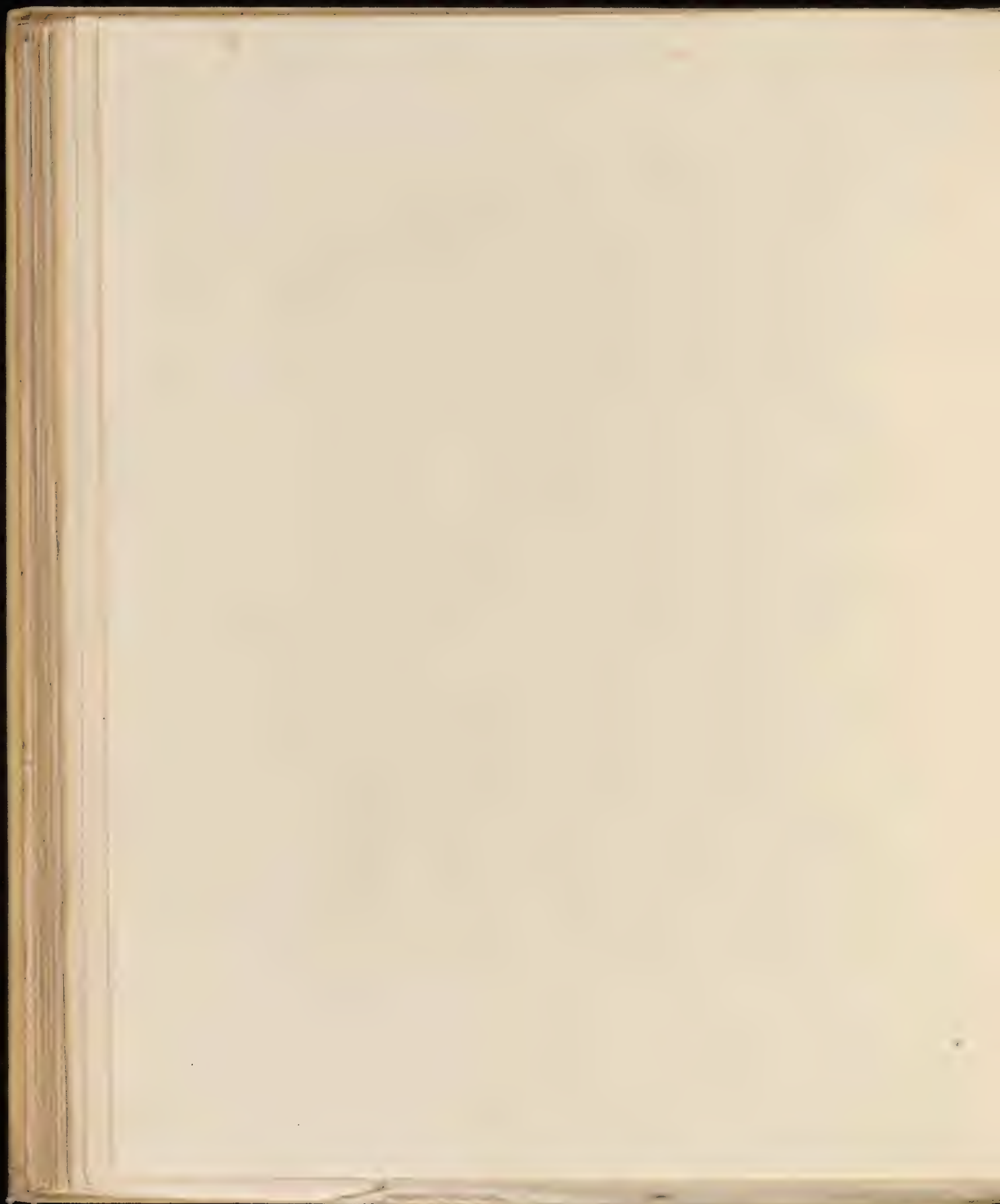
report ensued, and the charge lodged in the ceiling. Dawson fell, literally prostrated with the shock. He did not recover from the effects of the appalling escape for weeks, and he told me that he felt a horror of fire-arms ever afterwards.

"Dear old Henry Dawson! It was a privilege to know such a man, a distinction and an honour to, as it were, walk with him step by step, as in his own simple yet proudly firm and confident way he climbed the mount of fame to the very summit. His quaintnesses were delightful, his insight was an education to the comrade who watched it and heard its graphically direct exposition, and his simplicity had the refreshing charm of the cowslip breath of an English spring. He and Mrs. Dawson were religious people, and regular worshippers at their chapel. Nevertheless, in early days, Dawson would occasionally break through his rigid rule and paint on the Sabbath-day. He might, had he known it, have quoted the testimony of the highest lady in the land for such a practice, but that would not have been Henry Dawson's way. As a lace-worker, Sunday was his only day of leisure. Possibly he felt that there were thoughts and feelings and aspirations in his mind when he was painting which were not out of accord with the blessed day of rest. However, one Sabbath he placed his loaded palette on a chair. While looking intently at his work he sat down. He was adorned in his Sunday best, being in fact attired for chapel. The impression made by that unhappy palette proved indelible. He regarded it almost in the light of a judgment. At any rate, he never again handled palette or brush on the Sabbath. You had a proof of his quaint simplicity in the pleasure he found in watching the sparkling rainbow colours in a diamond ring that had been given to him in exchange for a picture. He told me that he could see all the gas lights of the chapel in this diamond during the service. Studying science and no doubt listening to the sermon at the same time."





*St Mary's Church  
Bever.*







*Powder Blue Old Nankin  
at 48, Bedford Square.*



## CHAPTER IV

Mr. Orrock's farewell to the medical profession—Settlement in London—43 Bloomsbury Square—Mr. Walter W. Oulless, R.A., and Sir John Millais—Art comradeship—The portrait of Mr. Orrock—W. L. Leitch, Mr. Orrock's last and greatest teacher—Leitch's method—"Scale practice"—His maxims—Mr. Orrock elected a member of the New Water-Colour Society—Leitch, the Queen's drawing-master—Dressing for the first lesson at Buckingham Palace—The *contretemps*—"Would I be sent to the Tower?"—Mr. Orrock's estimate of Leitch as a man and as a painter—J. D. Harding—His prodigious influence as a teacher—His supremacy in his medium—His literary "Ghost"—Mr. W. A. Chatto ("Stephen Oliver")—Curious extracts from an unpublished diary—David Scaife—Art at Astley's Theatre—Little known of a remarkable Scottish painter.

**A**FTER Mr. Orrock had retired from his practice in the Midlands and finally closed that chapter of his life, we find him, in 1866 or '67, settled in London, though not yet in a habitation exclusively his own, in Bedford Place. He was now a professional painter, practising the water-colour art with an occasional divergence into oil, and, as opportunity offered or was made, steadily adding to his collection of works by the English masters, picking up pieces of blue china, and acquiring fine examples of furniture by the men of the Chippendale period and their forerunners. It is perhaps worthy of mention that ever since Mr. Orrock has resided in London it has been in an "Adam"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,  
That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams, got;  
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,  
Wi' virils an' whirlygigums at the head."—*The Brigs of Ayr*.

"The celebrated Robert Adam was the architect of the New Bridge. At all events, it appears from Ayr burgh accounts that he was paid for a plan of a bridge which he had supplied. There is a local tradition that Alexander Steven, mason, who built the structure, was also its architect. Robert Adam was the second son of William Adam, of Maryborough, near Kinross. He was born in Kirkcaldy in 1728, and died in 1792. He is buried in Westminster Abbey. His father and four brothers were all architects."—Note to "The Brigs of Ayr" in the "Life and Works of Robert Burns," edited by Robert Chambers, and revised by William Wallace.

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house" on the Bedford estate. On leaving Bedford Place he went to reside at No. 43 Bloomsbury Square, a fine house of this description which was occupied by Mr. Bart Rous. Mr. Rous was an amateur artist who, taking up the pursuit of painting rather late in life, nevertheless won a place as exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He was brought, as it were, into the arts, by his life-long intimacy with Mr. J. Sparkes, for many years head-master of the Lambeth School, which, during the period of his control of that remarkable training Academy, perhaps moulded more artists of distinction than all the rest of the metropolitan schools put together. Mr. Sparkes subsequently became head-master at South Kensington. Mr. Walter W. Oules, R.A., who resided with Mr. Rous, was a Lambeth student. About the time of Mr. Orrock's installation at 43 Bloomsbury Square, art, in various forms, was practised, as it were, "all over the house." Mr. Orrock had his separate studio, of course; Mr. Bart Rous had his; and there was another (towards the termination of his sojourn at 43, for in the beginning he and Mr. Rous shared the same atelier) for Mr. Oules. At 43 Bloomsbury Square Mr. Orrock, whose wife is a highly accomplished pianist, began those pleasant musical parties with the Henry Dawsons that are mentioned in the previous chapter of this work.

It was in this interesting abode that Mr. Oules terminated his endeavour as a painter of subject pictures, and adopted the resolution to abandon that line of art in favour of portraiture. The comradeship under a most hospitable roof embraced the late H. S. Marks, R.A., Mr. Claude Calthrop ("an historical gold medallist" and a Lambeth student); his brother, Mr. John Clayton, the well-known actor; the late Mr. Philip Westlake (another Lambeth student), Mr. Walter Stacey, Mr. Christian Symons, and Mr. Cyrus Johnson (all three members of the Lambeth brotherhood), Mr. Horace Cauty, and the late Mr. William Holyoake, a Curator of the Royal Academy, with Mr. Ion Perdicaris, a Græco-American, who included the painting of allegorical subjects

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within his extensive and peculiar répertoire of gifts and graces. Mr. P. R. Morris, A.R.A., was also an occasional visitor. Amongst the callers on Mr. Oules in that day of somewhat chequered achievement and great promise—a promise destined in his case to merge into brilliant fulfilment within an astonishingly brief space of time—were Josef Israels and Millais. It was when Mr. Oules's fine picture, "Cazotte," painted from the inspiration of Carlyle's "French Revolution," was on the easel that Sir John Millais visited his compatriot's studio. The work should be remembered. It was exhibited at the next ensuing show at Burlington House, and an engraving from it was subsequently published in the *Illustrated London News*. "Cazotte," with "Sympathy," and "Home Again," proved what a fine thoughtful painter of history in *genre* and of idyllic romance effaced himself when Mr. Oules devoted his career entirely to portrait painting. It was while Mr. Orrock was resident at 43 Bloomsbury Square that Mr. Oules painted his portrait, a reproduction of which forms the frontispiece of the first of these volumes.

Mr. Orrock had had three teaching masters, namely, Ferguson of Edinburgh, Burgess of Leamington, and Stewart Smith; yet, desiring, if possible, to perfect his knowledge of the technique of the water-colour art, he longed for one master more. He had ascertained on the other side of the Border that W. L. Leitch, whose beautiful drawings were the ornament of "Illustrated Scotland,"—drawings associated with some of the finest examples in water-colour of Clarkson Stanfield, J. D. Harding, and George Cattermole,—was by far the best teacher in London. Leitch had been chosen by her Majesty and the Prince Consort to give them outdoor lessons in landscape, and he frequently visited Balmoral for that purpose. Mr. Orrock obtained an introduction to the veteran master from a friend in London, and promptly presented himself at his studio near Regent's Park.

"I called on Mr. Leitch," says Mr. Orrock, "and was received by him as 'a brither Scot' with the utmost cordiality. But my spirits

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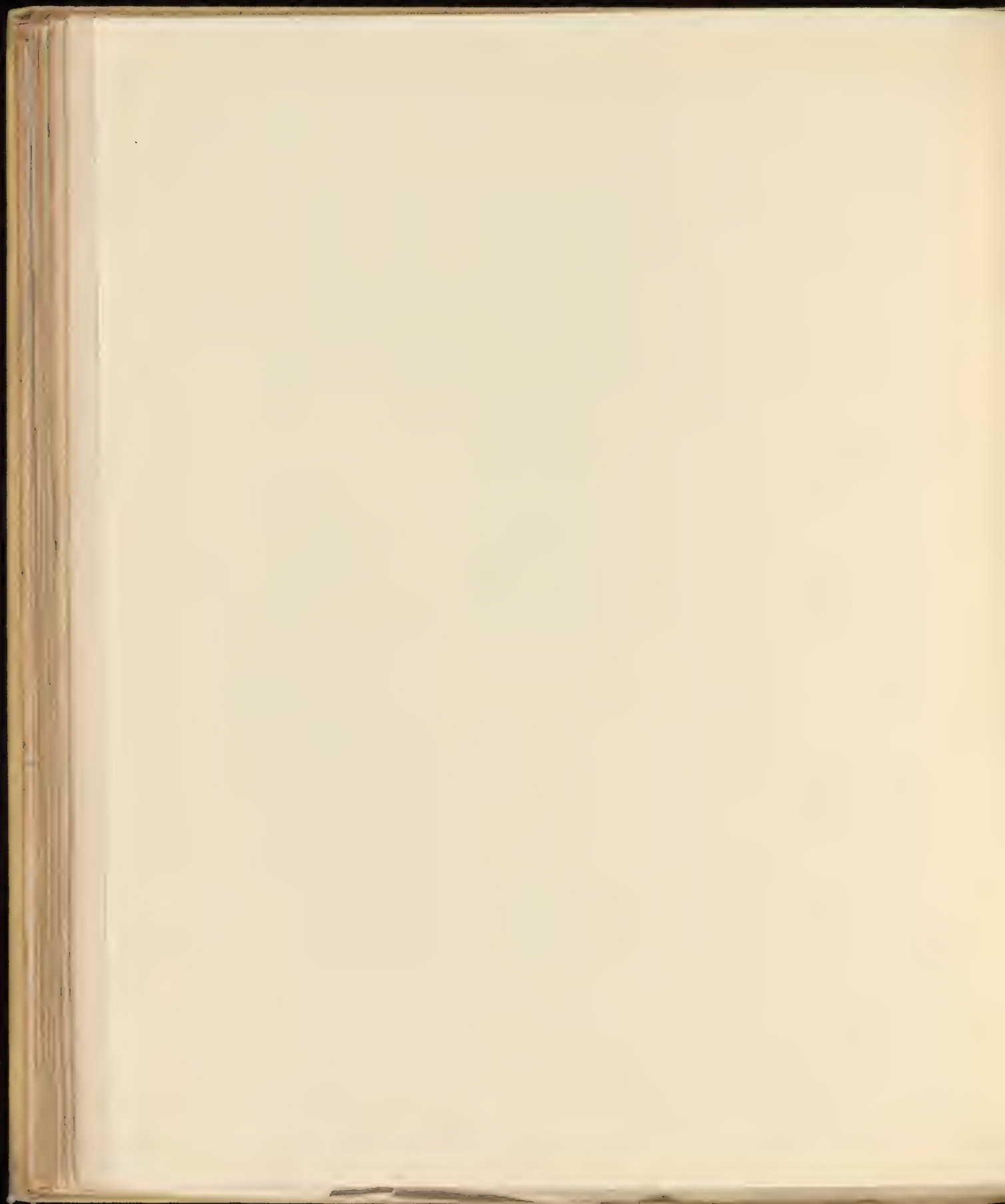
dropped to freezing point when the kind old gentleman, who had foregone teaching, stated that in consequence of the state of his health he feared he would be unable to gratify my earnest entreaty. He asked, however, and that rather pointedly, if I desired a series of lessons as a professional? I replied that I did. I then told him what I had been doing, and (this I felt was a point gained) obtained his consent to pay him another visit and show him my sketches. On my calling the second time he examined each sketch with separate care, and, as I ventured to think, growing interest, and when he had looked at the last said, to my great surprise and no small gratification, 'Mr. Orrock, you are a practised draughtsman, and I have not a word more to say on that head. But, you do not understand the methods of water-colour painting so as to express perfectly the various phenomena of nature.' He then proposed, after being again assured that I was determined to carry the art forward to the utmost of my power, that I should sedulously practise the rudiments of water-colour painting with a view to my becoming completely skilled in the work. This he called scale-practice. It consisted in the continual application of flat washes, employed so that one wash could be placed over the other without disturbing that which was underneath.

"I paid him a visit every week during the season at his studio in Abbey Road, and on each occasion he produced a small drawing, begun and finished for my instruction, clearly explaining every stage of the process as he went on. This veteran teacher and master, and charmingly estimable man, continually stated during the progress of his fascinating labour that there was no special mystery in the mechanical performance, but the reverse, since the processes of work (as I myself have proved) could be made plain by object-lessons. The genius must exist before, and the genius must be expressed after, but in the mean time there must have been acquired a complete mastery by the exponent of what he (a musician) aptly described as scale-practice. At the termination of the five seasons' lessons, to my surprise and delight, Leitch told me that I was eligible for member-





DURHAM CATHEDRAL (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH) 1873



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ship in his society, then called the New Water-Colour Society, of which he was at the time Vice-President. On presenting my drawings for competition I had the singular satisfaction of finding myself admitted within the fold. Leitch proposed me, and I was supported by Louis Haag, the President.

"As a painter, W. L. Leitch was one of the most accomplished masters of the water-colour art of his time. He was on a level with Clarkson Stanfield, J. D. Harding, and T. M. Richardson, but he lacked the genius of such men as De Wint, Cox, Barret, and, of course, of Turner. He was an absolute master of the processes of water-colour painting, and his power of drawing with the brush, especially displayed in skies, enabled him to express himself with easy and unflinching facility. It was put down, it was there, and there was nothing more to be said. The greater men I have mentioned, with Girtin, had also a perfect command of the mechanism of their art. This peculiar skill, which gives the genius of the English masters its language, is at the root and in the flower of the supremacy of the English school of water-colour painters.

"Leitch was amiable, big-hearted, of bright intelligence, and gifted with Scottish humour. He told me that he had often been on the stage—I think in Glasgow. This, I infer, was when he was a scenic artist. It was no uncommon custom in his early days for a scene-painter to occasionally 'go on' for a part. In London he was scenic artist at the Pavilion Theatre, succeeding in that position no less a master than George Chambers. Leitch was a great admirer of Chambers's work in every department of it. He thought so highly of the scenes by Chambers which he found when he accepted his engagement at the Pavilion, that it was with extreme reluctance he painted any of them out. He informed me that Lady Canning was one of his best pupils, and that when the Queen and the Prince Consort saw her drawings, which she had made from nature, they asked who was her teacher. She said, Mr. W. L. Leitch. The Queen thereupon sent for him, and he, having the most primitive ideas of Royalty, and being modest and nervous withal, did not

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know what to do or how to attire himself in order to approach the presence. However, he did apparel himself for the occasion in what he conceived to be a sort of court dress, which, of course, included the usual silken hose, shoes with silver buckles, and their appropriate accompaniment. The Queen appointed the time at which he was to attend at Buckingham Palace, for her Majesty to receive the first lesson. Lady Canning received him, and increased his trepidation by expressing her regret that he had been so particular in his attire. He was so distressed that he resolved to fly from the Palace. Lady Canning, however, would not hear of such a thing. She said, 'Mr. Leitch, the Queen expects you, and on no account must you disappoint her Majesty.' He was presently ushered into a room, and presented to the Queen, but the day being dark, he saw that the table which was to be used for the lesson was, for the purpose, too far from the window. Lady Canning asked him if he did not think the table had not better be moved. Leitch replied that, 'with her Majesty's permission, he would like the table to be nearer the light,' expecting, of course, that a servant would be summoned to effect the removal. But her Majesty said, 'We can do this ourselves.' Thereupon the Queen, Lady Canning, and the artist pushed the table nearer the light. Unfortunately, in doing this, the water-jug was overturned, and Leitch, in his efforts to save the vessel, 'bumped heads,' as he expressed it, with her Majesty. He added, such was his bodily and mental condition, that he almost collapsed. He thought he must instantly be sent to the Tower! After this little *contretemps* the lesson prospered, and, thereafter, master and Royal pupil became in their congenial pursuit firm friends. That was Leitch's own expression, and he had many remembrances of his pleasant teaching of a most appreciative pupil to warrant his simple-minded remark.

"One day, looking over a portfolio of his, I came across several drawings in the style of De Wint. (As a matter of fact they were afterwards sold in London *as* De Wint's.) I asked

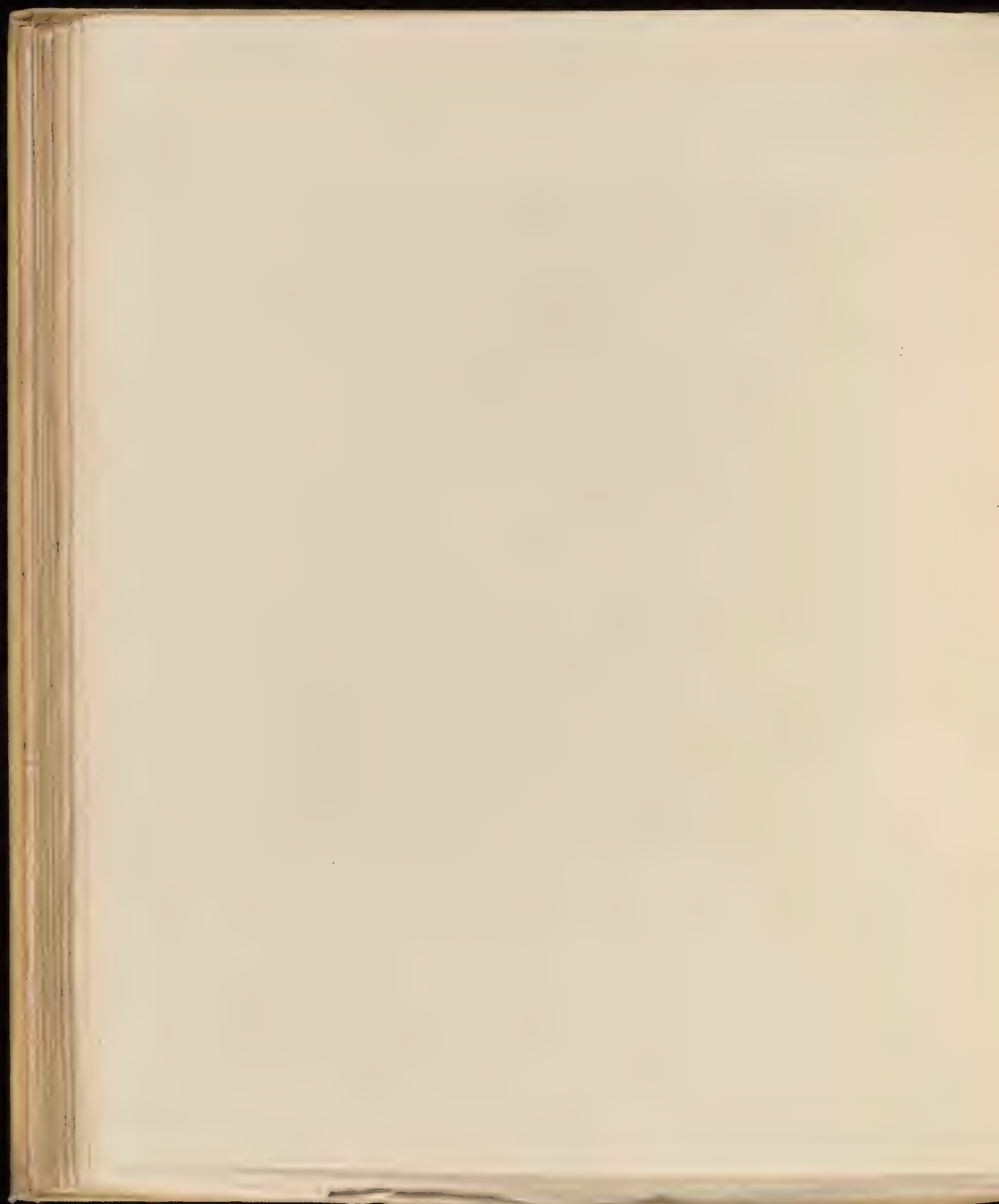




John H. H. H. H.

John H. H. H.

Mrs. Huskisson.



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him how it was he had produced drawings so marvellously like those of the great master. 'Well,' he replied, 'since De Wint's death I have received a number of his pupils, and so, to satisfy them, I did several drawings in imitation of his manner.' He added, 'Jimmy, you would hardly believe it, but you can learn the process as easily from the pupil as you can from the master.' He often said of J. D. Harding that he was the finest tree-draughtsman that ever lived; also, the most perfect of all draughtsmen and landscape artists on the lithographic stone. As to the masters with whom he had been most intimately associated, namely, Harding, Stanfield, Cattermole, and Richardson, they were, in his opinion, the most skilful mechanics that he had been acquainted with. 'But,' he added, 'one thing I must admit, my friend, and it is this. Compared with Turner, *we never lose ourselves!*' He was very fond of saying, 'Never humbug yourself. Look into the works of the great masters, and see where *you* are.' He was a great admirer of George Barret, 'a man who was never surpassed as a painter of sunlight. No oil-painter, not even Claude himself, or Cuyp, in consequence of the medium in which each of them painted, ever rivalled Barret.' Leitch was a true natural musician, and his favourite composer was Mozart.

"Mention has several times been made of J. D. Harding. I met him on several occasions, and was struck with his refined manners and agreeable conversational powers. But he gave me the impression of a man of somewhat limited sympathies in art. In fact, when he talked about William Hunt I felt that he was entirely out of sympathy with that unrivalled master's exquisitely manifold achievement. I complimented Harding on his magnificent tree-drawing, and he candidly avowed that in his belief he had done more to depict the character of trees than any artist who had preceded him. It is certain that J. D. Harding towered above everybody in lithography, and his style as a draughtsman was his own—Harding and no other! It may at the same time be said that, in his anxiety to depict the peculiar characteristics

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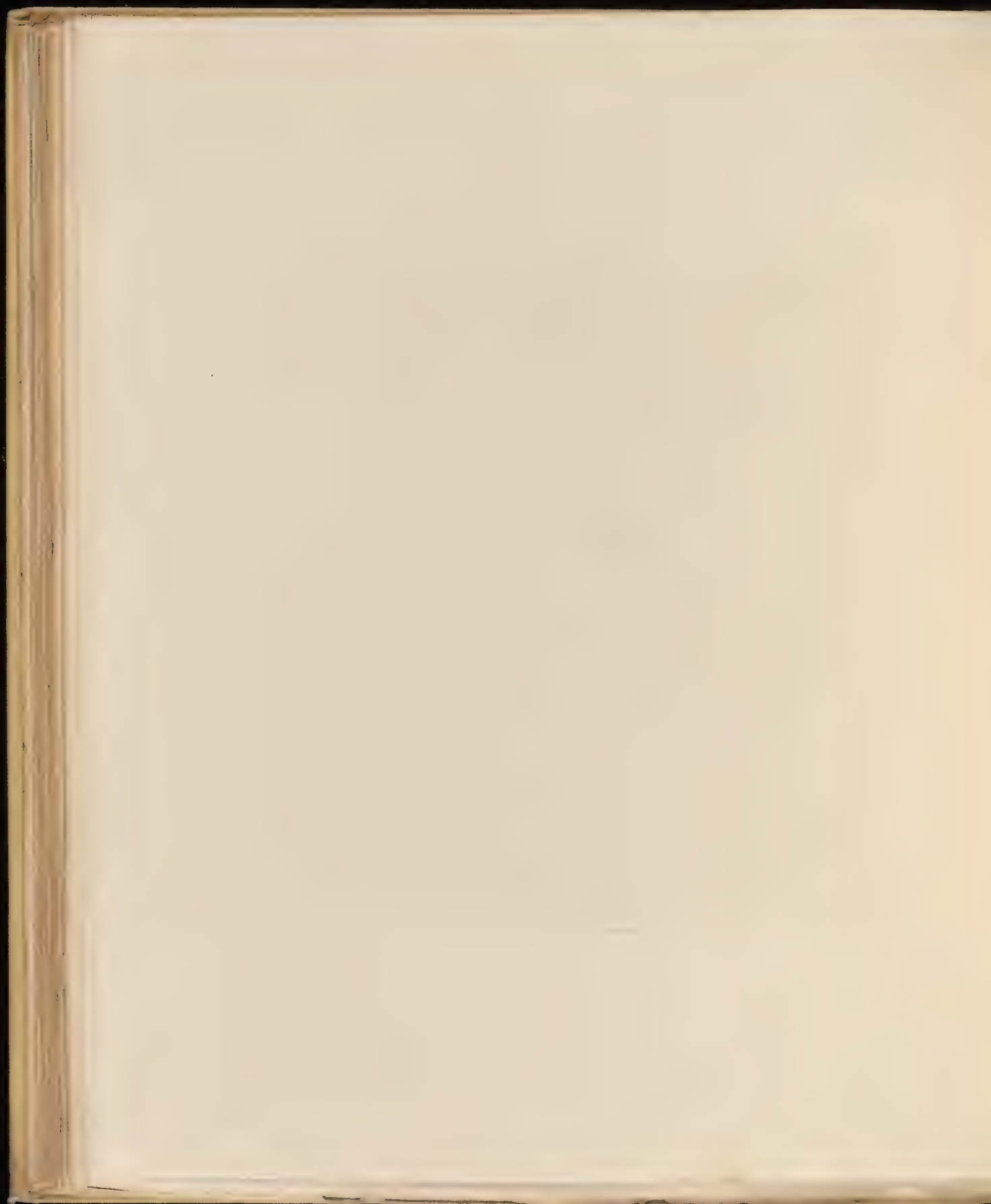
of each tree, he erred on the side of a too pronounced individualism. It is, however, without doubt that he has been the means of teaching multitudes of landscape-painters that which they could not have as readily acquired without his aid."

Mr. Ruskin has testified to J. D. Harding's qualities as a personal instructor. Proof of the influence of the teachings of his books, by means of explanatory text and pencilled example, is clearly afforded by a comparison of the landscapes produced under the guidance of the conventional drawing-master prior to the advent of Harding and those that were executed after the master of masters in his medium, which was lead-pencil or chalk, had made his "principles" and "practice" known. Veterans in the art of painting and drawing-masters of ripe experience are well aware of the change. They remember the period anterior to "South Kensington," and how wanting it was in sound methods of instruction. A visit to the typical drawing-class which formed part of the Mechanics' Institute's scheme for educating "the masses," made an intelligent lover of the art wonder and despair. He saw a number of students, for many of them were students in the best sense of the term, engaged in slavishly copying those French studies of heads which bore the trademark "Julien"—clever, showy, meretricious lithographs that were turned out by the ton—and it was evident to him that the pupil who could most accurately imitate the cross-hatching of the original, and most effectively put in the requisite touches of white upon tinted paper of the deepest hue, was the pride and envy of the class. There was no lack of books of instruction and drawing copies provided by David Cox, Sidney Cooper, Rowbotham, Aaron Penley, and others, but J. D. Harding was the first root-and-branch reformer of a system—if it could be called one—that offered no principles for grasping, no sane practice for pursuit. His "Lessons on Trees" appealed to the mind of the receptive student who was blundering on in the wrong direction, or in no direction at all, like a revelation. A worker, the aspirant acquired





*The 'Red of' Corn.*



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technical skill; an artist in grain, he perceived in the lessons that which no lessons or examples had ever disclosed before. Harding sent him to nature. If he went thither imbued with too much of the Harding who particularised and accentuated to excess, he came away impregnated with the Harding feeling and an enlarged liberty of treatment which, with increased perception, enabled him to turn the teacher's guidance to meaningly artistic profit. One conceives that Mr. Ruskin himself would have been unable exactly to measure the benefit he received from the instructions of this master. As to his influence on the men of his time, there is no more curious study than that of the Harding stamp on the landscapes of the period, and it would be easy with many of them under successive observation to point it out.

J. D. Harding, for all his unquestionable gifts of exposition in teaching, would have probably failed, as Turner did, in clearly lecturing on any branch of his art. He wrote, or partially wrote, his own books, it is true, but he was indebted to another pen for the shape in which they issued from the press. This interesting fact is now made known for the first time. The late Mr. W. A. Chatto,<sup>1</sup> one of Tom Taylor's most valued friends, and a man of varied culture and literary skill, officiated as J. D. Harding's assistant, if not exactly as his ghost. In a private journal kept by Mr. Chatto during the early days of *Punch* and the beginning of the *Daily News* (concerning which journals there are recorded some curiously interesting facts), particulars of his association with the artist are from time to time set down. In 1843 he writes: "In the evening called on J. D. Harding, the water-colour painter, with whom I had a long conversation on the subject of beauty

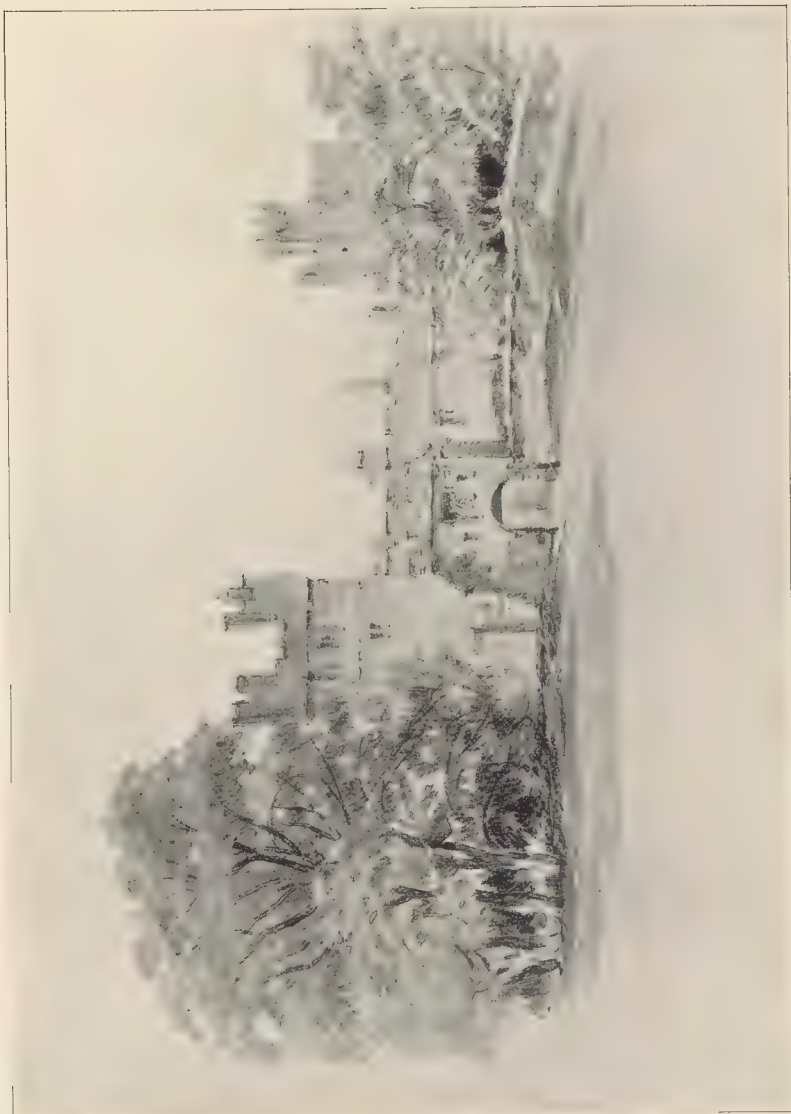
<sup>1</sup> Author and editor, under his own name, of "A Treatise on Wood Engraving," "Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards," and other works. Under his *nom de plume* "Stephen Oliver," he produced "Rambles on the Border," "Scenes and Recollections of Fly-Fishing," &c. "There is a small 8vo volume called 'The Angler's Souvenir,' by P. Fisher, a pseudonym of W. A. Chatto, published in 1835, which contains vignette plates and woodcut borders by 'Beckwith' and Topham."—Note to Biographical Sketch of F. W. Topham in "History of the Old Water-Colour Society."

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and propriety in painting." The journalist's entries of the sums received from Harding for literary services rendered, disclose a hard taskmaster and a mean rate of payment. As to a "colour note" one wonders whether, in their respective characters of master and pupil, Harding and Mr. Ruskin ever discussed the question. Writes Mr. Chatto:—

"*N.B.* J. D. Harding's opinion about *blue* being a colour that 'was not naturally so pleasing as red and yellow,' and that Nature had been sparing in giving it to plants and animals. His illustration—of a man with a blue face. Had he looked at Nature with greater attention to her actual productions than to his own theory, he would have found more *blue* than was consistent with it. He would have remembered that the sky is blue and the sea also where it is very deep; and that blue eyes were not absolutely horrifying. The flowers now in my garden are of the following colours." Here are given, in three parallel columns, the list of the flowers under the respective heads of "red, or partaking of red," "yellow, or partaking of yellow," and "blue, or partaking of blue." In 1845, Mr. Chatto, in his capacity as corrector of the press, and a very great deal more, deals critically with the artist. "Received a revise of sheet L of Mr. Harding's work. It contains many additions and corrections, some of them for the worse. Some of the expressions are 'queer.'" As to another portion he writes: "Engaged in revising sheet M of Mr. Harding's book. An irksome task, as it is so obscurely and, at the same time, so *mouthily* written." This is a mild protest compared with what follows. "Received sheet Q of Mr. Harding's 'Principles and Practice of Art.' The portion on colour has caused me great trouble and vexation, as much that I strike out in the MS. he rewrites in his copy for the printer. He has made sad work of the complementary colours, which I put right in the MS. I am thoroughly sick of cleaning other people's dirty sheets, and of toiling twice over to make sense of skimble-skamble stuff. On Thursday, 26th March, began the revision of 'The Progressive





*June 1884*

GATEWAY OF NAWORTH ('BELLED WILLS') CASTLE. (PENCIL SKETCH) 1884.



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Lessons on Art.' I shall be compelled to re-write the whole." Again: "Engaged in correcting a proof of Harding's Chapter on Colour, a task of extreme difficulty, as almost every sentence is either obscure or involves a contradiction. I never read anything so thoughtless." This was on the 5th of May 1845. On the 22nd of the same month the diarist continues: "For seven hours I have been wearifully employed in endeavouring to make sense and remove contradictions in two other sheets. I was never more distracted with two proofs in the course of my experience in this line." On the second of January 1846, Mr. Chatto records a welcome completion: "At night received the first proof of the new edition of Harding's 'Elementary Art,' which I have aided him in revising." The next entry, dated February 17th, 1846, is touched with gentle satire. "Memorandum, that in sheet from 65-68 of Harding's 'Elementary Art,' third edition, I made no positive alterations." In charity to the memory of a distinguished painter in the Water-Colour School and a great teacher, the account which the long-suffering diarist gives of his business relations with J. D. Harding remains between the covers of the diary. The extracts terminate here with thanks to Mr. Chatto's son for the privilege of making them public.

In reverting to his old master, and endeavouring to recollect references made by him to artists whom he had known, Mr. Orrock regrets that he can do little more than recall Leitch's frequent mention of the Scottish painter, David Scaife. This is to be regretted, because Scaife was evidently a man of some mark both in Edinburgh and London. John Burnet, in "The Progress of a Painter of the Nineteenth Century" (dedicated to Peter Cunningham), introduces Scaife in a chance re-meeting which he describes to Knox, the somewhat shadowy hero of the book, "as a Scottish artist who had given him a few lessons in Edinburgh, and was now settled in London, as scene-painter at Astley's Theatre." Although we meet with David Wilkie, Patrick Nasmyth, Thomson of Duddingston, and even Turner himself in Burnet's

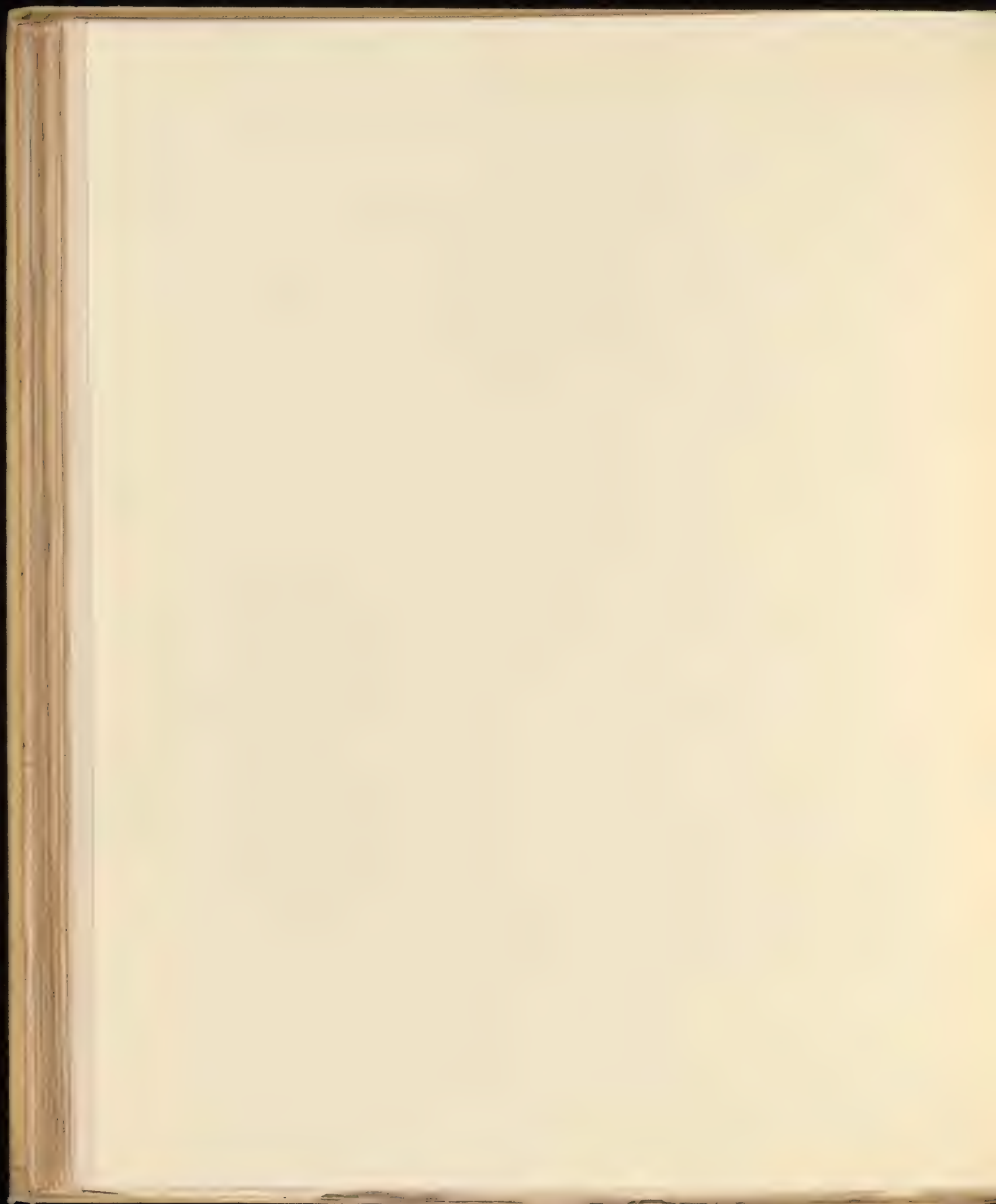
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easy chronicle of fact in its clothing of fiction, Scaife is ever prominent. John Wilson, a landscape painter at that time engaged at Astley's, is mentioned as the teacher of both Stanfield and Roberts, the Academicians, who commenced their career as scene-painters. (We remember pleasantly, that David Cox was at one time a scenic artist at Astley's.) It is related of Scaife that "In his earlier days he was a water-colour draughtsman in Edinburgh, and disputed the palm with others of that profession, confined principally within the precincts of the Scottish metropolis, among whom I may mention Carfrae and W. H. Williams, afterwards known from his views in Greece, which gained him the sobriquet of Grecian Williams. He had also for a competitor Alston, and the drawings of Farrington, the R.A., sent down annually to Scotland for sale." Leitch probably knew of Scaife, both as a scenic artist and as a wholesale teacher of the water-colour art by means of copies. Drawings on rough Whatman paper having obtained a vogue, "The printsellers and dealers in drawings not only supplied the amateurs, but furnished the libraries with examples to be sent out to schools and pupils. These Scaife used to manufacture at two-and-sixpence each, and supply the shops, not by dozens, but by hundreds." The interest awakened by such necessarily fragmentary allusions to David Scaife as the foregoing demands further satisfaction. More should be known of so remarkable a man.





NORTH WALL OF STUDIO  
With Millais's "Little Mrs. Camp," and Old English Furniture



## CHAPTER V

Turner—Thornbury's "Life"—Jekyll and Hyde—Mr. Orrock's essay on the First Pillar of English Water-Colour Art—Turner's intense study of nature—His studies of still-life—"Great colourist, composer, and draughtsman"—Turner and Mr. Ruskin—His mediums—"Magical rapidity and certainty"—Anecdote of Leitch and Turner—"The colour faculty"—His marvellous pictorial memory—A suggestion to the National Gallery—Mr. Orrock's citation—Early appreciation of Turner—Leslie—Hazlitt's lofty patronage—Shee's appreciation—Mr. Aubrey Beardsley—Darwin—A German authority on Turner—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

OF Mr. Orrock's Four Pillars of the English Water-Colour Art, Joseph Mallord William Turner is the first. His essay on Turner, which originally appeared in *Black and White*, will be found in its allotted place in this chapter. Before endeavouring to find a fairly just portrait of the greatest of English landscape painters, and one who, as such, made and finished his own school and personally prescribed its mastery, it will be convenient to recite the essayist's exposition. Turner's first and—with all the faults of Thornbury's "Life of Turner"<sup>1</sup>—best biographer, Thornbury's desultory predecessors and his more or less laborious successors in the same field of invincibly frustrated investigation, with Turner's superb panegyrist and "prophet," have submitted for our consideration a number of portrait sketches not one of which seems quite satisfying as a separately accurate likeness of either painter or man. This is not surprising. Accepting as profound fact the idea that informs the Jekyll and Hyde fable, there were two Turners, and a cloud of mystery enveloped both. One went intermittently into the wilderness and was lost. The other wrought at his art with his studio door locked. Thackeray, in speaking of Swift, says the giants should live alone. Turner was one of the Swift brotherhood. The

<sup>1</sup> Chatto & Windus.

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more one reads of what is assuredly known of Turner, the less one ceases to marvel at the amount of "chance medley" which prevails in the parti-coloured estimates of his biographers. However, the first and foremost Pillar of the Water-Colour Art, "unmixed with baser matter," stands out under a clear blue sky, as in the following exposition Mr. Orrock shows:—

"Avoiding more than a reference here and there to the influential facts of Turner's life, it is my present intention, after many years of study, to endeavour to make out the features in an art which has made the master celebrated. Mr. Ruskin has said that the famous English landscape painter had the greatest art *intellect* of any painter. It so happened that his genius was directed to landscape painting, but had he been a trained figure painter it may be presumed—judging, for example, from the splendid picture of 'Venus and Adonis,' which is in the possession of Mr. Cuthbert Quilter—that he would have ranked with the greatest of the figure painters, with a peculiarity of grand colour and of what may be described as a Turneresque touch and treatment that would have made his work unique. Turner was an oil-painter, water-colour painter, and etcher. In each of these departments of art he was a master. No man ever studied nature as intensely, and no man had woven the subtleties of nature into the grand compositions of picture-painting before he appeared. After deeply studying nature, he commensurately devoted himself to the art of picture-composing; and those who dislike *selection* of lines and masses, together with arrangements of colour, which they term conventional, may praise Turner, but they have no *real* appreciation of his genius. The still-life painters from nature are in no sense like Turner. We have, in fact, many to-day who paint much more in imitation of nature than he did, but the true *painter* is not always among them. The Persian carpet and Damascus tile may not be the least like nature, but a true artist in colour and design produced them. Turner could also paint still-life, and that equal to the performances of William Hunt, who was the prince



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of still-life painters. Indeed, those studies of birds and other objects of still-life which were contained in the celebrated Turner albums at the late Mr. Fawkes's of Farnley, exhibit a perfection of drawing and colour which only William Hunt himself could have rivalled. It is interesting to observe that they might even be mistaken for Hunt's early work, the likeness is so singular. Even the most accomplished experts might be pardoned if they mistook the 'handwriting' of one master for that of the other.

"Turner was a great colourist, composer, and draughtsman. His genius culminated in water-colour, and his magical facility in the employment of that medium placed him in a sphere of his own. As a composer of pictures, in other words, as an idealist of the pictorial representation of nature's effects in her most impressive moods, Turner has not only no rival, but had no forerunner. Art, we know, like literature and science, is cumulative, and, therefore, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as originality; but Turner, in his department of Fine Art, was at once more comprehensive and individual than any painter that ever lived. He painted every kind of landscape and seascape with an idealism which we call Turnerian, and with a classic grace of line and a treatment of masses which were peculiarly his own. It is not too much to declare that the elegant and subtle drawing of nature's curves in skies, seas, trees, mountains, torrents, and, above all, the tender rendering of the lines in fields and uplands, had not before Turner's time ever been observed, much less depicted.

"In oil, although manifestly a master, Turner in no one instance has expressed this individual power of subtle drawing, simply because the coarser medium could not, even in his wonderful hands, successfully compete with the supple capabilities of the water-colour. His drawings, executed in *water-colour*, supplied Mr. Ruskin with illustrations of every feature of nature which we find described in 'Modern Painters,' and as that celebrated work is the only one that was ever written on Landscape Art, it is no small compliment to water-colour that pictures in this medium

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should have been chosen by the gifted and perceiving author for the illustration of his imperishable essay. The material was, as it were, Turner's own. With that, and that alone, he could fully and forcibly express his artistic eloquence. He felt, in abounding measure, that light, atmosphere, purity, infinity, with the accident of mingled wet colours and gradation of distances, together with the absence of vehicles and 'paint,' could only be represented by water-colours. With a fine water-colour drawing the spectator feels himself in the presence of nature; with an oil picture he is stopped by the intervention of oils and varnishes. He can breathe in the one, but he sometimes feels stifled in the other. That Turner loved water-colours is abundantly proved by the myriads of drawings which he produced, but chiefly by his continual struggles to rival the qualities of water-colour painting in oil. The processes he used in his vain endeavour to accomplish his purpose often ruined his pictures, for the prepared distemper ground held the oil-colours so loosely that changes of temperature, especially in overheated galleries, caused the paint to fall off in patches, and showed the preparation underneath. 'The Regatta at Cowes,' in the South Kensington Museum, and 'The Landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay,' in the National Gallery, are marked instances of this. These two pictures, however, I observe, have lately been restored, and it is now to be hoped that overheating by the dry-air process may not cause another outbreak of the disease.

"Turner's early oil pictures, as a rule, are not cracked, and therefore it is clear that the desire to produce the brilliancy and aërial qualities of water-colour in oil induced him to prepare a white ground to 'opalesce' his colours on, but unfortunately, as we know, the pigments did not always adhere to the ground. This I have proved from careful observation, especially of a picture of the kind possessing the defects in question which is in my own collection. This picture had to be re-planed, so to speak, down to the paint, the pigments fastened to a sound canvas, and the

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patches here and there 'restored.' Morrill was the operator, and he was naturally elated with his success. This picture, curiously enough, was painted over an old portrait, and the canvas, which I have yet in my possession, has the duty-mark on it, thereby fixing the date of manufacture. Mr. Ruskin told me, when I described the case to him, that Turner was so prudent, not to say so parsimonious, that he often purchased old pictures cheap for the sake of the canvas and stretcher.

"Turner's training in *point* drawing of architecture and all materials for landscape, as well as in the laying-in of water-colours, was most severe and precise. The Henderson Collection in the British Museum proves this. Thanks to such preparatory discipline, he drew as freely and spontaneously with the brush as he did with the point, and thus upon bed-rock foundation the great master was enabled to fully express himself in all his moods, while building up for an enduring future his wondrous art-edifice. The *Liber Studiorum* exhibits supremely Turner's mastery of point and brush-practice. The training was his own. No Academy or School of Art taught him, for Girtin and he were both the founders and finishers. The same masterly modes of interpretation of nature were carried forward by all the great English landscape masters in water-colours, and there are still many painters living who can boast of the advantage of having received personal instruction from the so-called 'drawing-masters' who founded and perfected our famous school of water-colour painting.

"Turner was the most real as well as the most ideal of landscape artists. His real painting, however, does not appeal to those minds that look only for the scenic or *surface* truths of nature. His realisms consist of light, gradation, atmosphere, artistic colour, infinities in gradation, and broken colouring and so-forth. The surface truths of nature which are visible to the naked eye are not perceived in Turner. The 'seers' have to tell the people of the real merits of a master, and their auditors have

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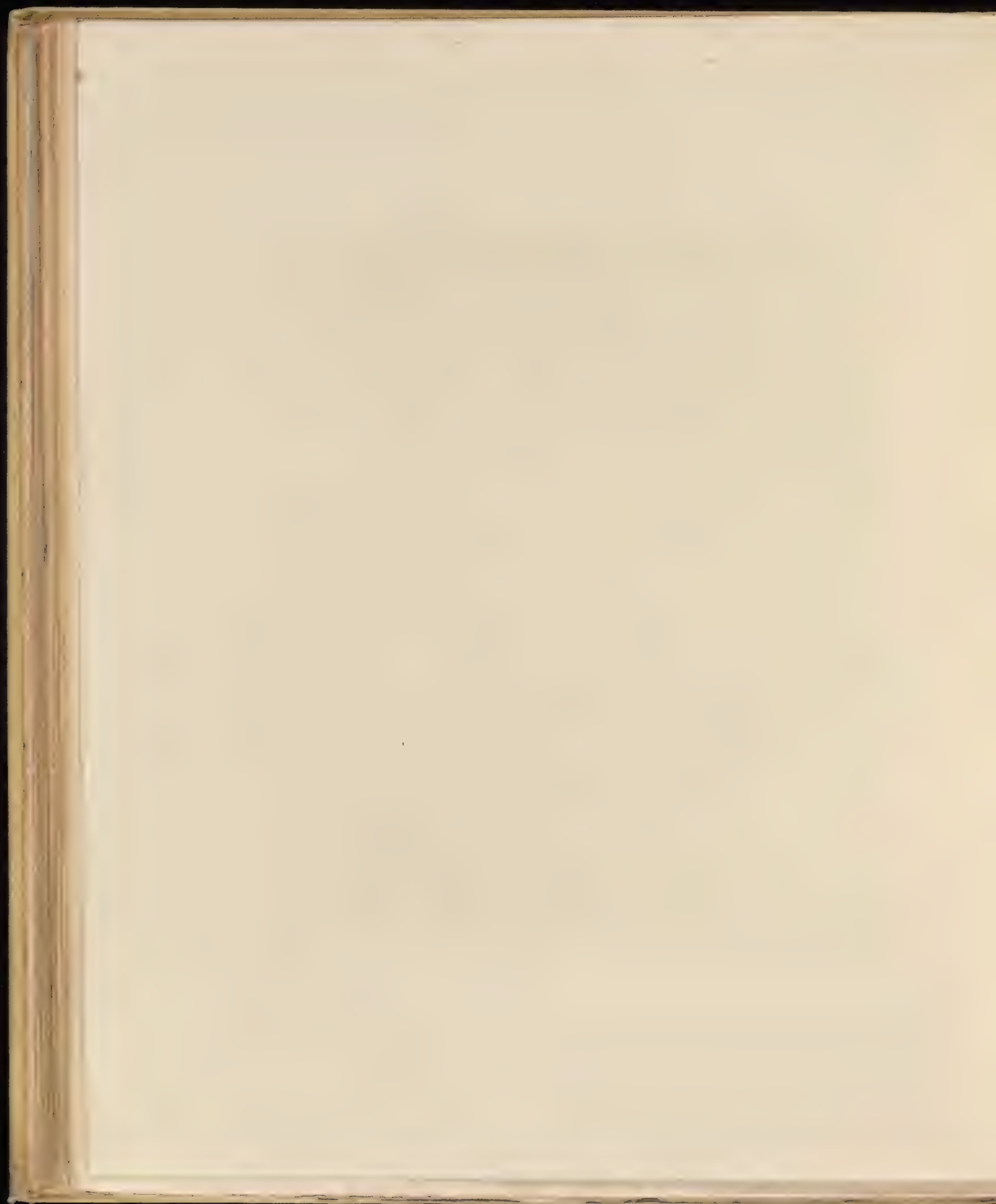
to accept for gospel the interpretation and elucidation of what would otherwise be to the multitude a sealed book. To quote Mr. Ruskin's words, 'The question is not decided by them, but for them; decided by the few, by fewer in proportion as the merits of a work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank and mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle, each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it as to receive its decision with respect, until in process of time the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all and held by all as a matter of *faith*, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.'

"That Turner's method was magical in its rapidity and certainty is shown by the vast mass of drawings and pictures to which he set his hand: enough, it is said, if reasonably spaced 'on the line,' to fill a moderate-sized National Gallery. We have an exposition of his rapidity and knowledge in the 'First-class Line-of-Battle Ship taking in Stores' in the collection at Farnley Hall. It is said on good authority that this drawing, with its multiplicity of detail, was executed at Farnley in the course of a forenoon. I have been informed, on unimpeachable authority, that each of the matchless drawings which were painted for Mr. Windus, of Tottenham, was executed there in a day. Turner's method was to float-in his broken colours while the paper was wet, and my late master, then Vice-President of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours, told me that he once saw Turner working, and this was on water-colour drawings, several of which were in progress at the same time! Mr. Leitch said he stretched the paper on boards, and, after plunging them in water, he dropped the colours into the paper while it was wet, making *marblings* and gradations throughout the work. His completing process was marvellously rapid, for he indicated his masses and incidents, took out half-lights, scraped out high lights, and dragged, hatched, and stippled until the design was finished. This swiftness,





*Leeward. Hlog on the Wey. Sharkey.*



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grounded on 'the scale practice' in early life, enabled Turner to preserve the purity and luminosity of his work, and to paint at a prodigiously rapid rate. The result we see in numberless drawings, unlaboured, yet displaying marvellous finish, unsullied, bright, and beautiful.

"The colour-faculty of this great master was peculiarly his own. He never painted direct from nature, but drew with precision, with the point, the leading lines of his subject, and perceived and treasured up in his mind the rarest effects. *Character* with him was everything in drawing, and he was as saving with his lines as he was with his money. He so cultivated that extraordinary pictorial memory of his that he was able to carry away with him, by the aid of a few lines and marginal notes, a perfect comprehension of the entire scene. And the lapse of time neither withered nor impaired the vividness of the impression. He could recall and depict it on occasion years after it had stamped itself on his mental retina. Turner courted nature in her poetic and artistic moods, and left her in her ordinary aspects to be wooed by ordinary minds. His gamut was great indeed. He could 'lay on' with untiring force from the beginning to the end of a colossal oil-picture, and, possessed by a more delicate spirit of inspiration, could be dainty and joyful over a tiny 'Berwick,' a 'Loch Katrine,' or a 'Skiddaw.' His masculine oil-work, such as 'The Shipwreck' or 'Calais Pier,' stands forth like a giant on guard over such tender and gem-like drawings as those just named. Nothing was too mighty for him, nothing too delicate.

"Turner's topography, like his other expositions, was both real and ideal.<sup>1</sup> He gave the impression of the scene as he felt it, but often, if compared with the reality, it was found that cities, and even mountains, had been moved to suit his humour. Of all landscape painters Turner was a witness against the so-called

<sup>1</sup> "Scott knows that the blue given by the evening air to the mountain is a portion of its true appearance, and as true and as everlasting as the grey granite it turns out to be on a nearer approach."—*Giffellan*.

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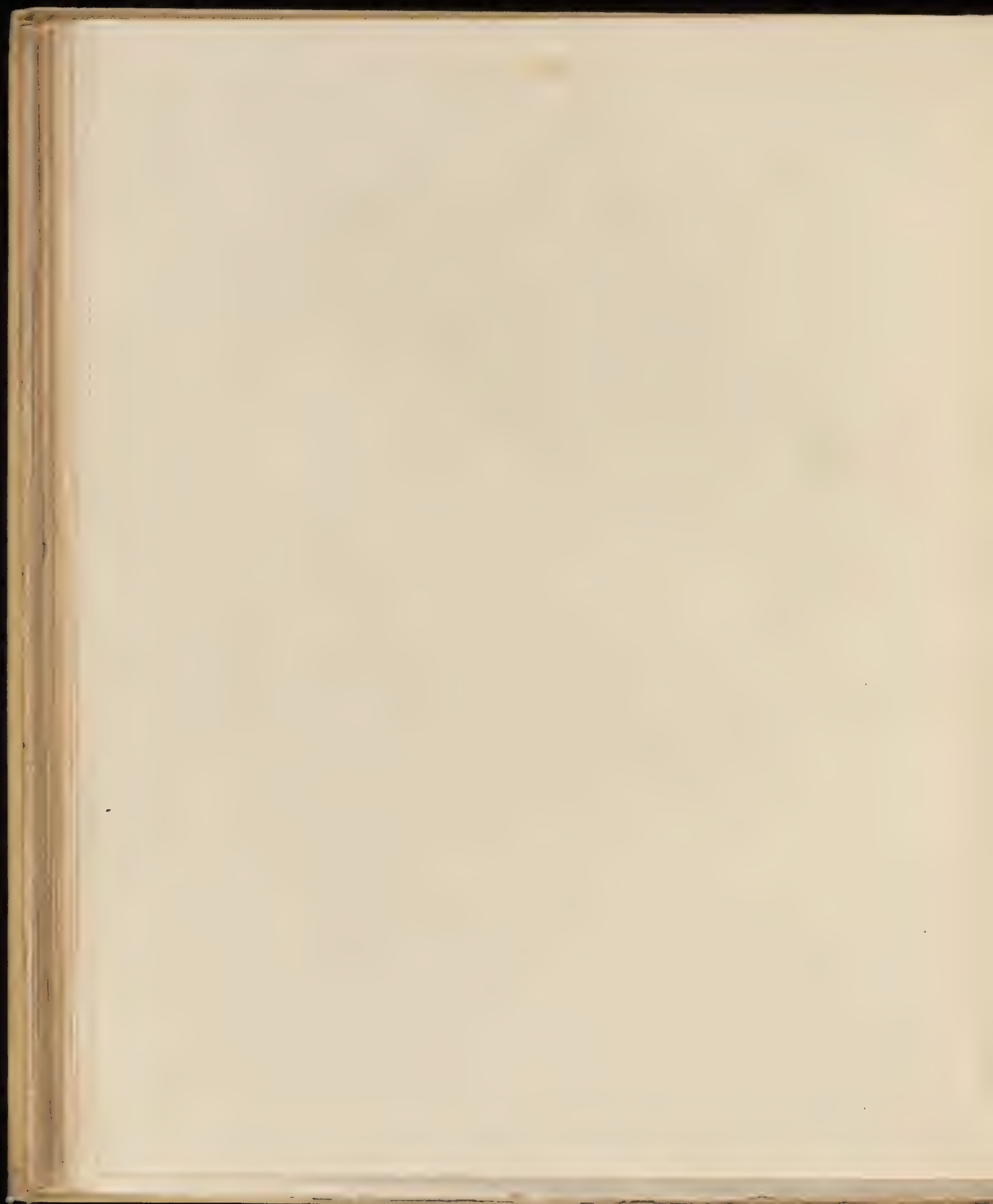
scientist artists of the day. The 'scientist' is for ever demonstrating varied phenomena, and by the aid of his illusory diagrams lecturing, as it were, on geology, botany, cloud-forms, natural history, and so forth. Turner, on the contrary, gives us grand and glowing discourses on art, founded on and suggested by loving communion with nature. He was a poet, and had therefore nothing in common with the matter-of-fact 'isms of those who prosaically copied the mere externals of nature. Perhaps the crown of his genius is the *Liber Studiorum*, which is executed in monochrome in water-colour. In this *magnum opus* we behold the most varied subjects of landscape, seascape, and architecture treated in Turner's most majestic manner. Here we are afforded the opportunity of studying his splendid short-hand point drawing, and his mastery of composition, apparelled in the loftiest artistic idealism. This work alone places him immeasurably above all the masters. The public are now anticipating the removal from 'the cellars' of the National Gallery, of the greatest landscape production of the world, and they will not be satisfied until English masters of the Turner order—the heads and makers of our great school—are placed on their respective pedestals.

"I feel impelled at this point to make a digression. Might it not be well if some proportion of the works in oil by Turner, Constable, and other English masters, who are either over-represented or misrepresented as to quality and other features on the walls of the National Gallery, were removed and distributed to the numerous public galleries throughout the kingdom, where they would be welcomed and valued? Even apart from any *new* gallery, I venture to affirm that, by such a clearing and weeding, ample space might be provided—if I may be permitted the figure of speech—for the missing links in the chain of our school of painters in oil, as well as for a thoroughly representative collection of the works of our great water-colour artists. With the water-colours in juxtaposition with the oil-paintings, the respective merits of the two classes of work might be adequately seen and tested.





Mr. Ozier.



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"Turner's failing, which he had in common with Müller, was his lack of physical repose. He was restless for work. His teeming imagination called up vision upon vision which fevered him almost to the verge of madness. Had he not possessed an iron constitution, which kept a strong guard over his troubled spirit, he would have perished, like many another 'possessed' genius, before his powers reached maturity. Yet, with less of this consuming fire, we might not have had the 'Ulysses' and the 'Rockets and Blue Lights,' and other magnificently realised visions of majestic beauty and poetic grace which are the wonder of the world. Mr. Ruskin manifestly feels this when he writes Turner's last words: 'I cannot gather the sunbeams out of the East, or I would make them tell you what I have seen, but read this and interpret this, and let us remember together: I cannot gather the gloom out of the night sky, or I would make that tell you what I have seen, but read this and interpret this, and let us feel together; and if you have not that within you which I can summon to my aid, if you have not the sun in your spirit and the passion in your heart which my words may awaken, though they be indistinct and swift, leave me, for I will give you no patient mockery, no laborious insult of that glorious nature whose I am and whom I serve; let others imitate the voice and gesture of their master while they forget his message; hear that message from me, but remember the teaching of divine truth must still be a mystery.'"

While Turner in the early manhood of his art was not the unappreciated or ill-used genius Mr. Ruskin avowed him to have been—for the painter had his appreciators, and (as an enlightening line in Leslie's *Life*<sup>1</sup> proves) he sold his pictures for prices that were not at all bad for their period,—his greatness in water-colour was unperceived. Hazlitt knew nothing about it. Indeed, it is questionable whether the autocratic dictator in art criticism

<sup>1</sup> "Turner desires me to tell E—— C—— that he cannot undertake a picture of less size than three feet by four, and that his price will be 200 guineas for that size."—Letter from Leslie to his Sister, May 23, 1837, "Autobiographical Recollections."

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—who, himself an indifferent if not a wretched painter, was austerity personified when he sat in judgment on other men's paintings—was capable of perceiving the exquisite qualities of a Turner drawing. Such rare and delicate wine was not for his palate. The master himself Hazlitt patronised with a lofty tolerance which in these days excites a smile. He says, in his essay "On the Fine Arts," that "many of the pictures of modern artists have evidenced a capacity for correct and happy delineations of actual objects and domestic incidents only inferior to the masterpieces of the Dutch school. I might here mention the names of Wilkie, Collins, Heaphy, and others." If the oracle had contented himself with mentioning "Wilkie, Collins," "and others," his belief in the capacity of Heaphy—of whom, alas! the present generation of students of English art know next to nothing—to play second fiddle to the Dutchmen would not have risen like a ghost to challenge the sanity of the criticism. But Heaphy! Heaphy and Wilkie! Hazlitt is pleased to add that "We have portrait-painters who have attained to a very high degree of excellence in all the branches of their art." (Be it remarked parenthetically that in the essayist's view Gainsborough was not of the number.) "In landscape, Turner has shown a knowledge of the effects of air and of powerful relief in objects which was never surpassed. But" (note this summing-up, and tremble for the future fate of masters in the English school, Heaphy, Gainsborough, and the rest), "in the highest walk of art, in giving the movements of the finer and loftier passions of the mind, this country has not produced a single painter who has made even a faint approach to the excellence of the great Italian painters." Hazlitt has elsewhere said that "Rembrandt's landscapes one could look on for ever," and of Mr. Beckford's collection at Fonthill that it was "for the most part *trash*—either Italian pictures painted in the beginning of the last century, or English ones in the beginning of this." The Dictator in Art who grouped Wilkie with Heaphy, and condescended to notice Turner, was himself one of a group of men who belittled the

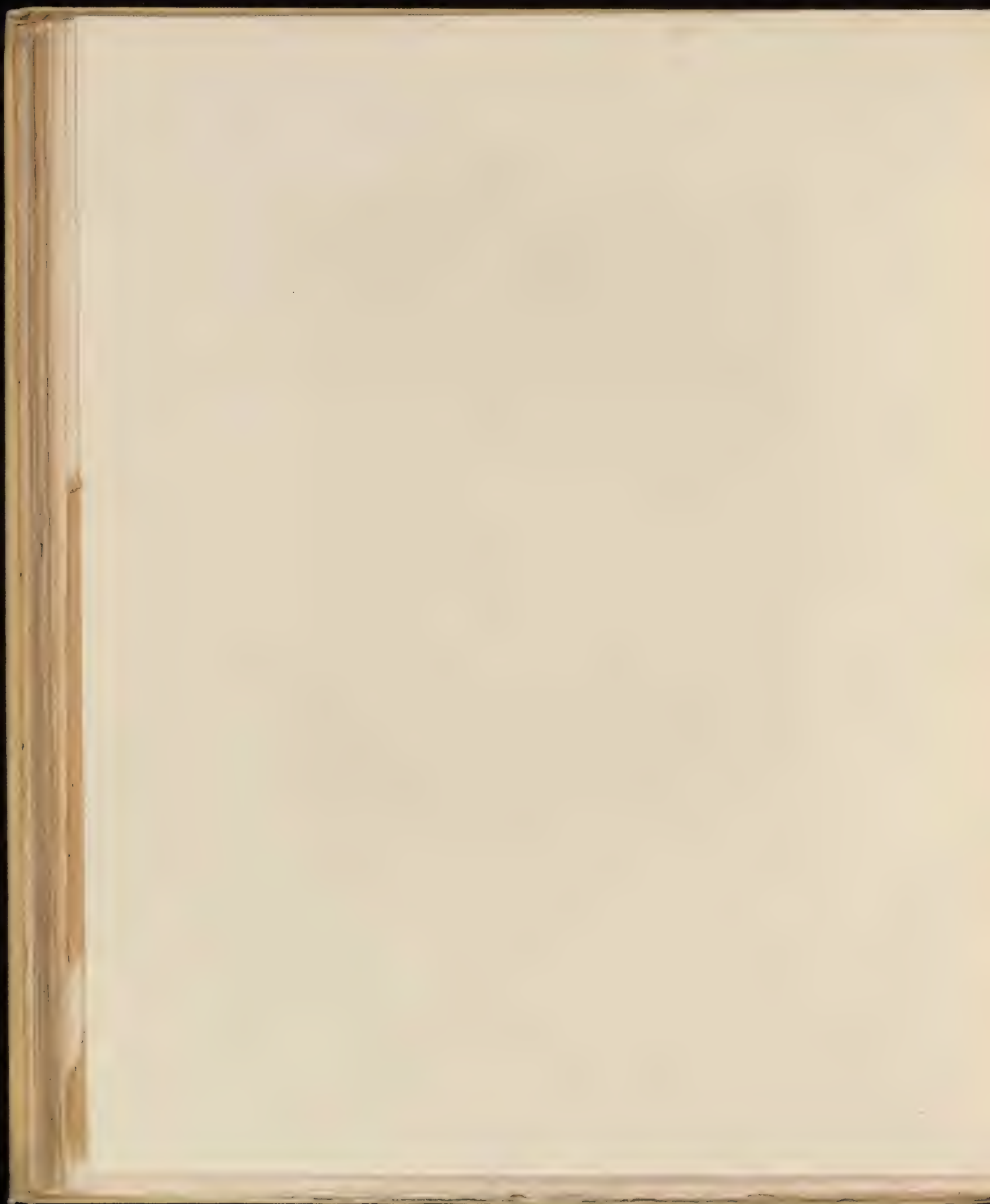




1. The Duchess of Collington.

2. The Duchess of Collington.

*The Duchess of Collington.*







John Russell & Co. 1818

Portrait of Mrs. Robinson

Mrs. Robinson. (Perdita)



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English while glorifying the Dutch, Flemish, and Italian schools. All the more gratifying, then, is it to know that even in Hazlitt's day the prophet was not without honour in his own country. The biographer of old Nollekens, writing in 1829, stands up stoutly for Turner; and Martin Arthur Shee, in one of his notes to "Elements of Art," published twenty years before, mentions "'The Shipwreck' by Turner" as one of three works—the other two by Hoppner and Lawrence—"which have surpassed the most applauded efforts of living genius in every other country in Europe, and which display a degree of excellence that would have been sufficient to establish the reputation of those eminent artists even in the proudest period of their art," and yet "they excited less attention from the literary critics of the day than is bestowed on the appearance of a fresh-imported figurante at the Opera-house, or a new tumbler at Sadler's Wells." Shee, however, was not alone in his recognition of Turner, nor were his brother painters, with him, exclusively discoverers of Turner's genius. In 1796-97 two of the most reputable critics—(there were few writers of any note who made a separate study of contemporary art for the enlightenment of an unpatriotic public in those days)—singled out Turner for high laudation. This was with respect to his "Fishermen at Sea." Mr. Caldwell, of Dublin, in a letter dated 14th June 1802, wrote: "A new artist has started up, one Turner, who beats Louthembourg and every other artist all to nothing." In "The Literary Panorama" for 1807, Turner's picture, "The Smith's Shop," is characterised as "a truly masterful performance." Other tributes of the like nature might be quoted, not a great number, it is true, but enough to prove that Mr. Ruskin had forerunners who appreciated Turner thoroughly, and who spoke out, if not with his eloquence, warmly in Turner's praise. But it is undeniable that until Mr. Ruskin made Turner his text for all time, the greatness-in-little of the painter's water-colours was unperceived. Turner, yes, and Turner as a painter

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throughout, was Mr. Ruskin's enkindling theme; but it was Turner expressing himself incomparably in water-colour which inspired preacher and prophet, and furnished fire for his imperishable discourse. Elsewhere in his notes, either to the poem just mentioned or to his "Rhymes on Art," Shee pays a remarkable tribute to the water-colour paintings of the English school. To that complexion we have come at last, after a somewhat historical digression, and concurrently to Turner, the first of Mr. Orrock's Four Pillars.

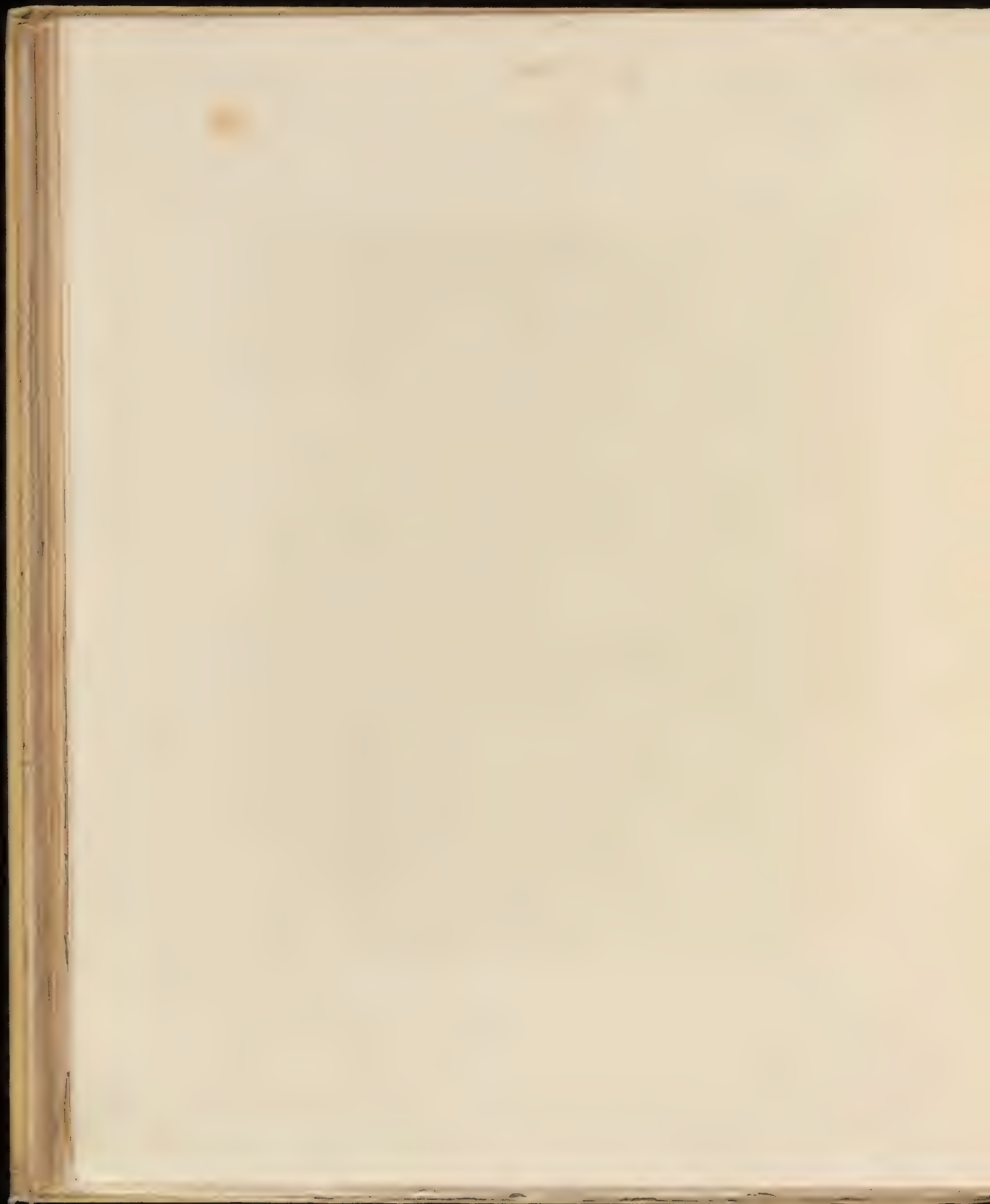
Turner and his prophet, the latter mainly in consequence of Turner, have attracted more intense attention, and made more strenuous adherents and adversaries, than painter and expositor ever did before, or, perchance, ever will again. A minister of the Scottish Kirk,<sup>1</sup> calmly entering up his journal in his study in the manse, "whiles" devoted to the composition of his sermons, can write, "I said Ruskin's strength was that of disease; he was just a sublime fever." The late Mr. Aubrey Beardsley, an artist who by at least two of his reviewers has been promised immortality, has declared that "Turner is only a rhetorician in paint. That is why Ruskin understood and liked him." Of the celebrated Darwin<sup>2</sup> it is related as follows: "This way of looking at himself in all matters of art was strengthened by the absence of pretence which was part of his character. With regard to questions of taste, as well as to more serious things, he always had the courage of his opinions. I remember, however, an instance that sounds like a contradiction of this; when he was looking at the Turners in Mr. Ruskin's bedroom, he did not confess, as he did afterwards, that he could make out absolutely nothing of what Mr. Ruskin saw in them. But this little pretence was not for his own sake, but for the sake of courtesy to his host." Darwin himself, however, has partly accounted for his inability to "see" Turner. He says in the autobiographical chapters of the *Life*, "I have also

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. George Gilfillan, author of "Bards of the Bible," &c.

<sup>2</sup> "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin."



*'Creature Comforts.'*





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said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music."

However, while not altogether losing sight of Hazlitt, let the present chapter be closed with the testimony of two latter-day witnesses for Turner, one a German art-critic, and the other an exquisite English poet. Writes Richard Muther,<sup>1</sup> "Everywhere to the border of the picture there is light. And he has painted all the gradations of light from the silver morning twilight to the golden splendour of the evening red. Hissing and with explosions, volcanoes spit out their lava, which sets the trembling air aglow, and the flaring colours of which blind the eyes. The glowing ball of the sun stands behind the mist, and transforms the whole ether into fine golden vapour. Vessels are sailing in the sun-stricken mist; in reality, one cannot venture on more than a swift glance into blinding masses of light, but the impression remained in the painter's memory. He painted what he saw, and knew how to make his effect convincing. And at the same time his composition became ever freer and easier, the work of his brush ever more fragrant and unfettered, the colouring and total sentiment of the picture ever more imaginative and like those of a fairy tale. His world is the land of sun, where the reality of things vanishes, and the light shed between the eye and the objects of vision is the only thing that lives." The words that now follow this eloquent outburst are few and simple, but they are those of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and they relate to drawings which were conspicuously present in Mr. Orrock's mind when he penned his essay on the First Pillar. She writes: "We went to Denmark Hill yesterday to have luncheon with Mr. Ruskin, and see the Turners, which are divine."

<sup>1</sup> "The History of Modern Painting:" Henry & Co.

## CHAPTER VI

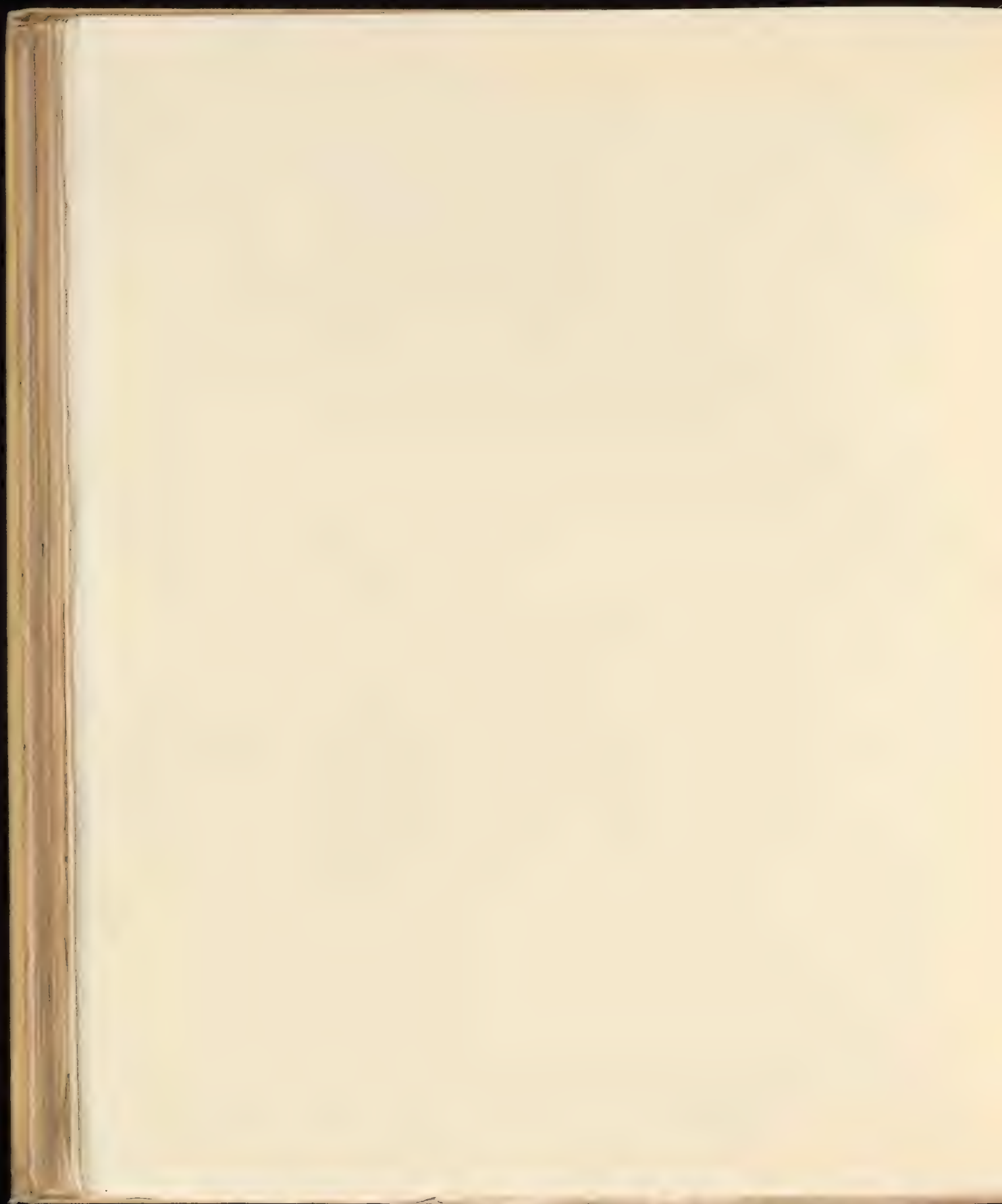
Tennyson on biography—Mr. Ruskin and Thornbury—The boy Turner—Early manhood—Disappointment—What might have been—Right and wrong feminine influence—Odious comparisons—Personal appearance—"The *Temeraire*"—Turner's self-abnegation—His benevolence—Father and son—Girtin, Stothard, Leslie—The children and the water-colours—The critics and "The Snowstorm"—Turner and W. L. Leitch—"I don't believe a word of it"—Mr. Graves and Mr. Orrock—Anecdote of Turner—The missing sketch—Tennyson on Turner.

IF the biographers of Turner, with no more than the commonly known facts of his life and its antecedents at their disposal, had been satisfied with a plain endeavour to account for him, we had been spared much unnecessary moralising on the painter's career. They were unable, like certain sorry "commentators" on Shakespeare's sonnets, to read personal profligacy into his glorious works, but they *shadowed* him when he left his studio and discharged a duty (*à la* Mr. Pecksniff) which they felt they owed to society by discussing conjecturally his adventures beyond. "What business," said Tennyson with noble scorn, "has the public to want to know all about Byron's wildnesses? He has given them fine work, and they ought to be satisfied. As for the excuse 'Tôt ou tard tout se sait,' nothing can be falser as far as the world is concerned. The surface of the *tout* may be, but the *tout* never is, correctly known. 'If one knew all, one would pardon all,' is much more likely to be the truth. The worth of biography depends on whether it is done by one who wholly loves the man whose life he writes, yet loves him with discriminating love. Few of these gossiping biographies are the man, more often the writer." If one knew all! We know enough of Turner to excite our regret that his familiar friends, Chantrey and Jones, have left such a scanty record of their personal impressions of the painter. They loved him, and assuredly not without cause. From his birth he was an



*Furness Abbey.*

FURNESS ABBEY. (PENCIL SKETCH.) 1853.





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object of sympathy and compassion. Without diving too deeply into obscure questions of heredity, let us remember that Turner's mother (from whom a recent writer<sup>1</sup> might possibly have contended that he derived the fire of his genius) was of unsound mind. Then, the barber's son had a somewhat squalid bringing up. He was taught to pinch and screw and save from his tenderest boyhood—if any part of that boyhood was tender. He never starved or was short of food and raiment; he was as well educated as his father's slender means permitted; and yet he breathed the air of a sordid thrift that was closely akin to parsimony from the very beginning. If his mother had madness in her blood, his father, judging from the few anecdotes of his extremely saving habits which have been preserved, was something of a miser. "Dad never praised me for anything but saving a halfpenny," Turner would in after-life sometimes say to his old friends. When Thornbury was setting about writing the biography of the painter, he received from Mr. Ruskin, in reply to a letter which he had addressed to the preacher of the gospel of landscape art according to Turner, the following admonition, as he describes it: "Fix at the beginning the following main characteristics of Turner in your mind, as the keys to the secret of all he said and did—Uprightness, generosity, tenderness of heart (extreme), sensuality, obstinacy (extreme), irritability, infidelity. And be sure that he knew his own power, and felt himself utterly alone in the world from its not being understood. Don't try to mask the dark side." The appraisement, accurate or not, would have been completer had it included a reference to Turner's extraordinary physique. It was said of him that he had the strength and endurance of a horse, nerves of iron, and the digestion of an ostrich. The work which he did could only have been accomplished by a man gifted with extraordinary physical powers. In the Preface to the first edition of the *Life*, Thornbury says: "I

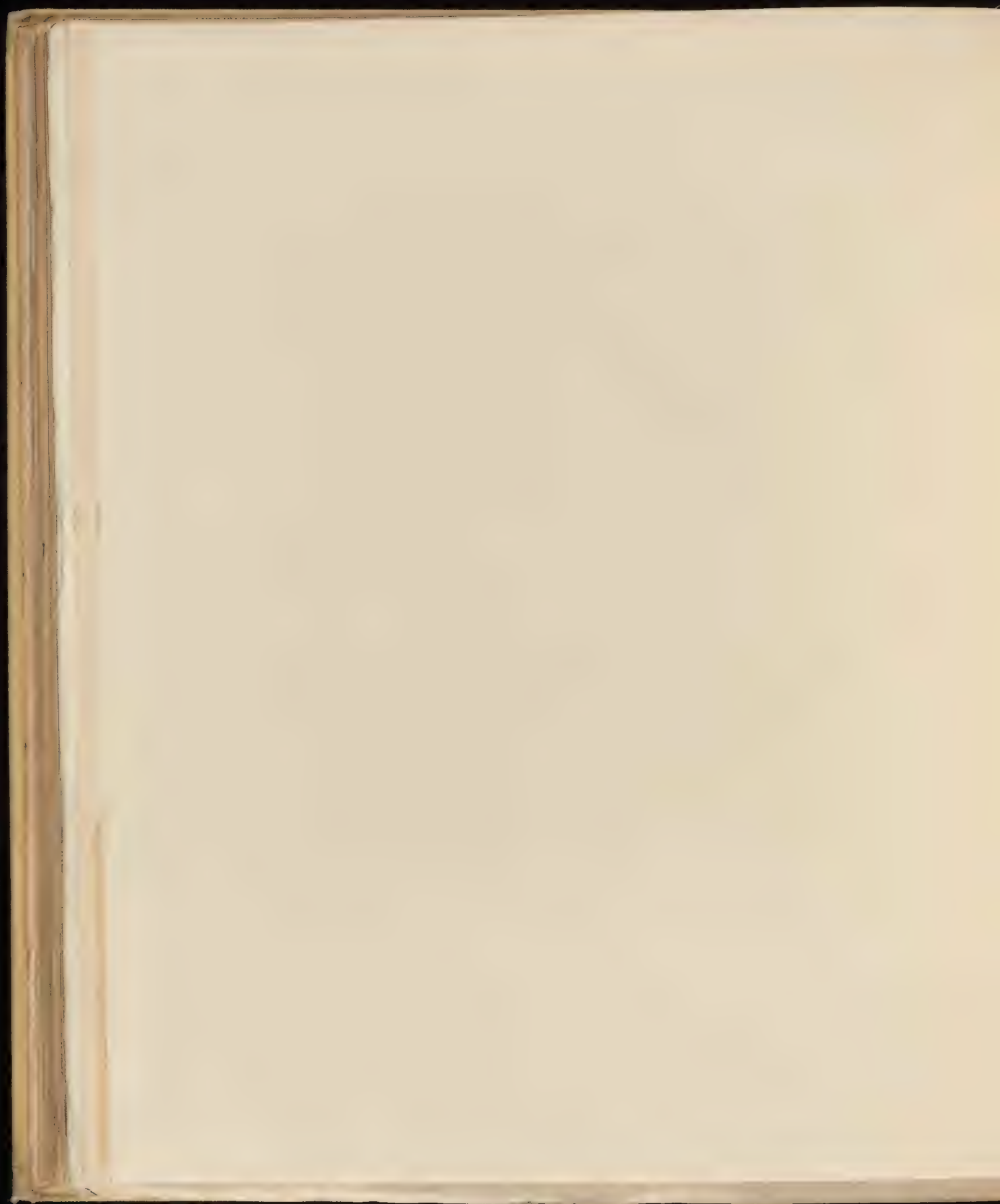
<sup>1</sup> The late J. F. Nisbet: "The Insanity of Genius."

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have tried to paint the man as I really believe he was, an image of gold with clay feet." In conclusion he remarks: "I can only trust that the following pages will at least show the injustice of Mr. Fairholt's assertion, 'that all reminiscences of Turner are unpleasant, and only tend to lower the man.'" Mr. Ruskin, on the publication of the *Life of Turner*, wrote to congratulate the writer on the "beautiful things you have discovered about him." This doubtless consoled Thornbury for the attacks of reviewers who "talked of me as a brutal undertaker, who tears the shroud with cruel indifference from the body of the dead man." There was no "ladyhood," the "strongest of civilising influences," to tame and polish Turner, and that, one of his biographers submits, "may have been great reason why he was never a perfectly civilised man." Another of Thornbury's successors, and not the only one given to making such comparisons, remarks that, "Just as the hero of Blenheim is now regarded as a splendid soldier, but a semi-illiterate and rather despicable man, so is Turner spoken of with less enthusiasm, seeing that personally he was unscrupulous in his dealings and coarse in his tastes. His shortcomings were not wholly inexcusable" (the magnanimity of this admission is charming), "but they can neither be palliated nor denied without sacrificing truth on the altar of hero-worship." If such biographers whip him with nettles, exhibiting a mournful enjoyment of the exercise, they seldom fail to apply the soothing dock-leaf to the stings. Marlborough, having served to improve the occasion, is thereupon dismissed, and we are then told by the homilist that Turner "shares with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others the honour of being founders of a new dynasty, the apostles of a new faith," and also that "in Turner's works is combined all that is distinctive and original in the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge." A slanderer of Rembrandt, playing a common part and speaking after a familiar manner, denounced the painter as "a miser and a sot," as if sots could paint as Rembrandt painted, or misers ever died in debt! One wonders



*Mrs Hodges*  
*(the Actress)*





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whether if (again quoting Tennyson) we knew all, many of the accusations which have been made against Turner would not turn out to be just as groundless.

A writer with some of Thornbury's method and vision might supply us with a book on the boyhood of Turner which one would be glad to study. The facts, carefully collected and put together with a strict regard to the laws of proportion and perspective, would, one imagines, remove much of the monster from the popular estimate of the painter's character. He slaved—and failed—at perspective under Thomas Malton, a drawing-master in Long Acre, who complained of his pupil's incapacity, and took him back to his father's house as unteachable. The boy made a second trial under Malton, who again returned him on his father's hands. The fact was, Turner was acquiring a knowledge of perspective in his own absorbent way. Some of that knowledge came to him, no doubt, when he was putting coloured backgrounds into Porden's architectural designs, and more when he was supposed to be qualifying himself as an architectural draughtsman in the office of Hardwick, the architect. Porden would have made him an architect, and indeed offered to take him without the usual premium. In the meantime, he had begun on his own independent account as a water-colour artist. The little drawings—examples of "stained" landscapes we should perhaps call them, using the term that was then applied to such work—were hung round his father's barber's shop, the prices being duly marked on them, and not exceeding three or four shillings apiece. It was Hardwick who discovered the boy's genius and advised him to go and study at the Royal Academy. That must have been about the time that Turner, the father, said to Stothard (who was having his hair cut), "My son is going to be a painter." Hardwick's perception had been preceded by a remarkable achievement. Turner's first picture was exhibited in 1787, he being then twelve years of age. It was a view of Dover Castle. He studied at the Royal Academy, and he was admitted with other lads to the

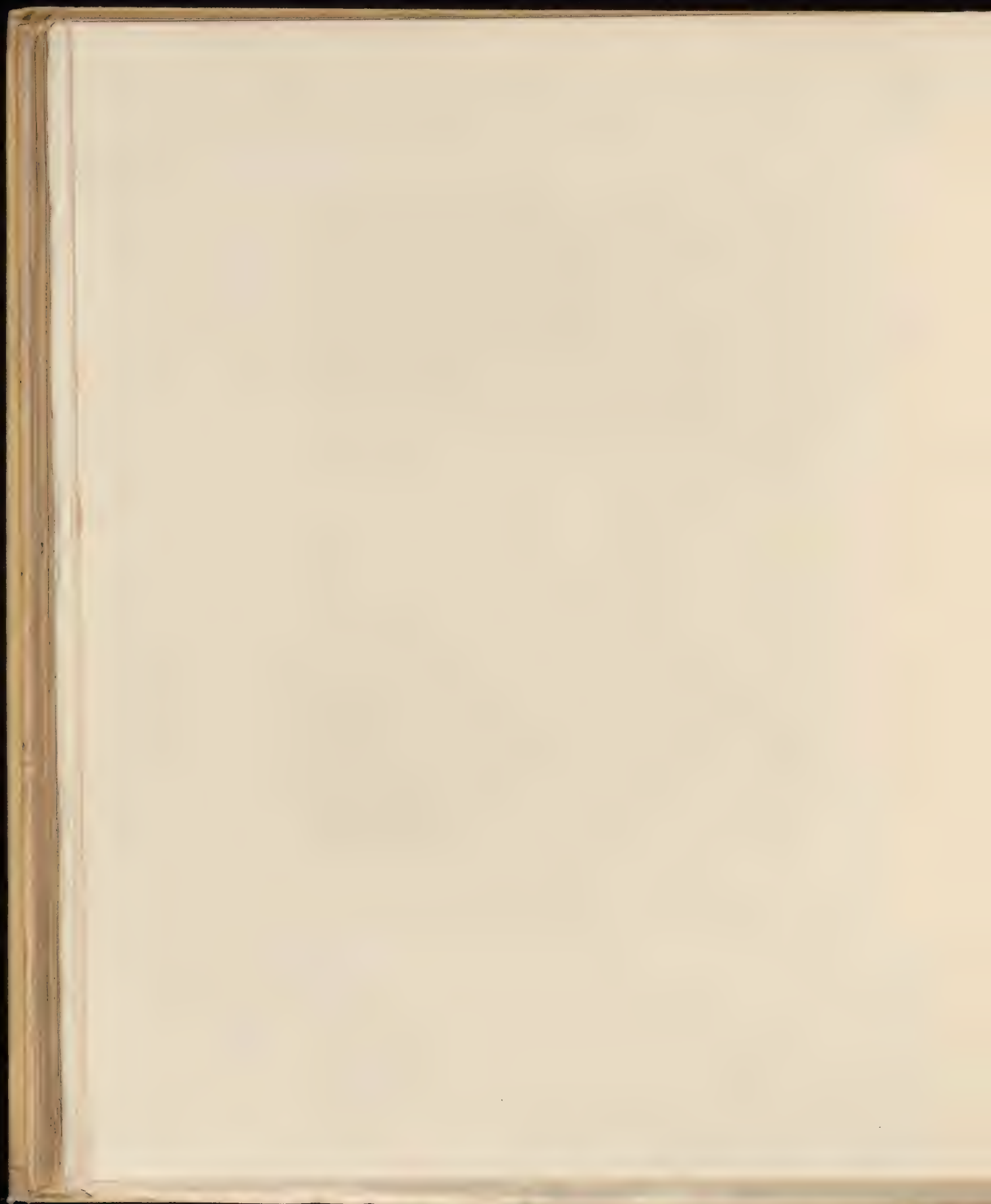
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house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who never refused a student permission to copy his own pictures or those by the masters which he had amassed, and was habitually ready with his counsel and encouragement. Turner founded an imperishable friendship with "Tom" Girtin (who was his comrade as a colourer of prints at John Raphael Smith's), which, taken with kindred characteristics that subsequently received development, such as his affectionate devotion to his poor old father, his love of children, his protection of the blackbirds' nestlings, his making companions and pets of Manx cats, stamp him, boy and man, with an endeavour and a nature one looks for in vain in the mud-painted portraits his analytical limners have perpetrated. Turner was neither the Bad Boy nor the Good Boy of the story-books. He did not even play truant, in order that he might sketch from nature, like Gainsborough. That he loved Tom Girtin with an affection not free from a feeling of worship is unquestionable. It has pleased one of his biographers to discover in Turner's schooldays impressions which, as a painter, lasted him all his life. Writes Hamerton: "It is therefore a probability which closely approaches certainty that the Thames at Brentford and the sea and coast at Margate were not without influence upon his destiny in determining the tendency of his affections." No doubt. In other words, a born artist's boyish impressions are indelible. But Turner painted moorland and mountain range, sweeping valley and rocky ravine, as well as river and sea, and Mr. Ruskin has avowed, with characteristically defiant force, that he was the only painter of landscape that ever *drew* the sky. If he as a boy was unconsciously garnering impressions of the scenery of river and ocean, he was also gathering into his marvellously pictorial mind the glorious forms and colour of the ever-changing firmament.

The early manhood of Turner was clouded, and his life warped, by a love affair in which he met with cruel usage. The friends of the young lady employed treachery to keep the lovers apart, and when the couple did meet, after a long separation, the severance



Lady Sondes.









*Miss Kitty Fisher  
the head by Sir Joshua Reynolds*

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was complete. She was engaged to another, and on the point of marriage. Inasmuch as she duly fulfilled the latter engagement, her conduct faintly recalls the lines which Tennyson applies to Sir Lancelot, whose

"Honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
'And faith, unfaithful, kept him falsely true."

We do not know all. We can only guess the depth of that inly bleeding wound, wonder how long it bled, and speculate on its after effect. On his side, at any rate, it was not what is called calf-love. It was the affection of a young man of enormous force of character, of matchless genius, and unbounded ambition, for his first, probably his only real, sweetheart. It was anything but a passing cloud on the primrose path of dalliance. What might have happened if—— But why pursue the idlest of speculations? One at least of Turner's biographers has done so with a bewildering result that would be amusing if it were not at the same time so pathetically inane. Observe how the writer's theories both jar and hang together—

"... If Turner had been married early in life, it is possible that he might have contented himself with being happy, if he had found happiness, and abandoned the ambition to become great."

"It is said that the girl whom Turner loved condemned herself to the life-long misery of an ill-assorted union; but we know that the painter entered upon half a century of celibacy—of celibacy without chastity—a life in which he formed, indeed, connections with the other sex, but connections of a kind which could do nothing for the elevation of his mind or the removal of his defects."

"Fortunate in so many things, Turner was lamentably unfortunate in this: that throughout his whole life he never came under any ennobling or refining feminine influence, either in marriage or out of it."

It is false to say that Turner "never came under any ennobling or refining feminine influence." Mrs. Trimmer possessed

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both the qualities named, and there is proof in her son's testimony that Turner benefited by their employment. He presented her with some drawings which she coveted, and that was a rare thing for him to do. Had a female relative of hers responded to his manifest admiration (his second love affair), he might have been married after all. Mention is made by Mr. Hamerton, from whose "Life of Turner" these later citations are made, of Shelley and Mary Godwin, and Byron and the Countess Guiccioli, in illustration of what might have been if "one of" Turner's "mistresses" had "by chance been a superior person." And there is an unsurprising reference to John Stuart Mill. What match-makers some of these biographers are! But (they are none of them certain) perhaps Turner was better unmarried.<sup>1</sup> Remarks Hamerton:

"The only use of feminine influence to a painter is a general effect on his mind—a refining effect, if the lady is more refined than the artist with whom she lives. But who in the world, masculine or feminine, had ever more refined perception of landscape beauty than Turner had? Could any refinement of feminine perception have added to *his* refinement? No; the gain which he might have derived from marriage might have been an infinite gain to himself in many ways, but it is not likely that it would have been a gain to his art. It is highly improbable that he would have painted better if married, and it is possible that the cares of a family might have prevented him from executing those important works which the public did not encourage, but which are now the very corner-stones of the great edifice of his fame."<sup>2</sup>

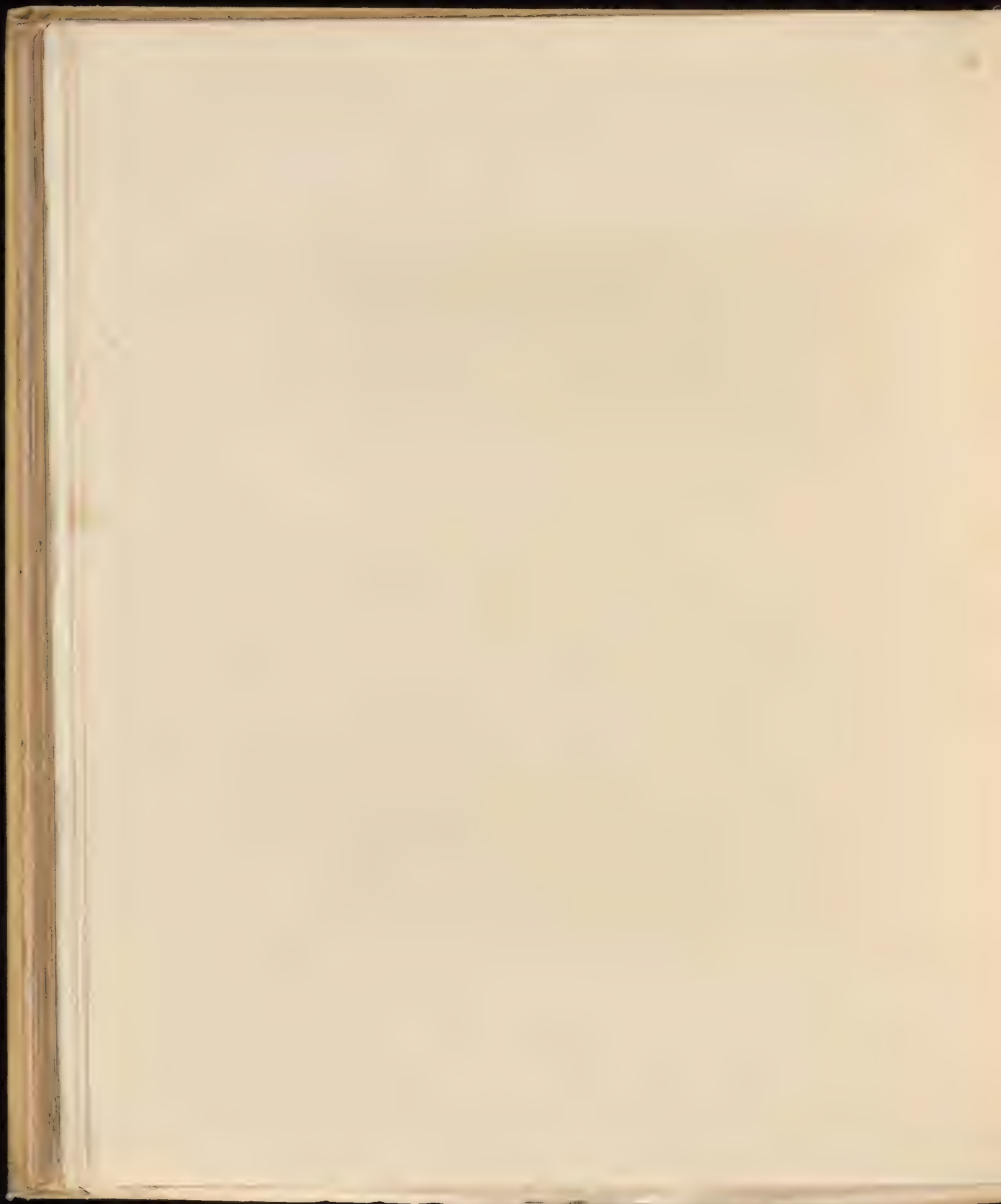
<sup>1</sup> "I read Hayley's 'Life of Romney' the other day. He married at nineteen, and, because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist,' almost immediately left his wife in the North, and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her, and she received him, and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of art, I am sure."—"Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald," quoted by Tennyson in front of his poem "Romney's Remorse."

<sup>2</sup> W. Cosmo Monkhouse, in "J. M. W. Turner, R.A." (*The Great Artists Series*), is to be credited with putting the case against Turner with more fairness than is shown by others





*The Work.*



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Finally, to make an end here of Hamerton's psychological theorising—

"It has been said of him that his mind was as nearly as possible, like those of Keats and Dante, intermingled; in such a comparison one might feel inclined to substitute Shelley for Keats, but it may be safely asserted that only amongst the most ethereal poets can we find a spirit of such delicacy as his. At the same time, he had another nature, which was something between those of a common sailor and a costermonger; by which I mean, that he was externally coarse, and had an appetite for low pleasures, with a passion for small gains. The poet's nature did not raise or refine the other, nor did the other perceptibly degrade that of the poet. The combination was not a mixture, and the central self of personality, the conscious *ego*, whatever that may be, passed from one to the other quite easily, down to the very close of life; as a pedestrian may take the road or the footpath at will when both run parallel along the whole course of his journey. The mystery of this is beyond all possible explanation; our nature is not sufficiently understood by us for such things to be clear except as simple facts. A character like Turner's would be rejected at once in fiction as untrue, but as a real existence it is undeniable."

It was a matter of common observation that Turner, who was "ruddy and white, and strong on his legs," looked like a sturdy British sailor. Let us say, selecting a particular type, like the master of a coasting vessel, or the captain of a river steamboat.

who have dealt with the subject. He says, "There is no doubt that he (Turner) habitually lived with a mistress; Hannah Danby, who entered his service, a girl of sixteen, in the year 1801, and was his housekeeper in Queen Anne Street at his death, is generally considered to have been one; and Sophia Caroline Booth, with whom he spent his last years in an obscure lodging in Chelsea, another. There are many who have lived more immoral lives, and have done more harm to others by their immorality; but he chose a kind of illegal connection which was particularly destructive to himself. He made his home the scene of his irregularities, and, by entering into intimate relations with uneducated women, cut himself off from healthy social influences which would have given daily employment to his naturally warm heart, and prevented him from growing into a selfish, solitary man. Not to be able to enjoy habitually the society of pure educated women, not to be able to welcome your friend to your hearth, could not have been good for a man's character, or his art, or his intellect."

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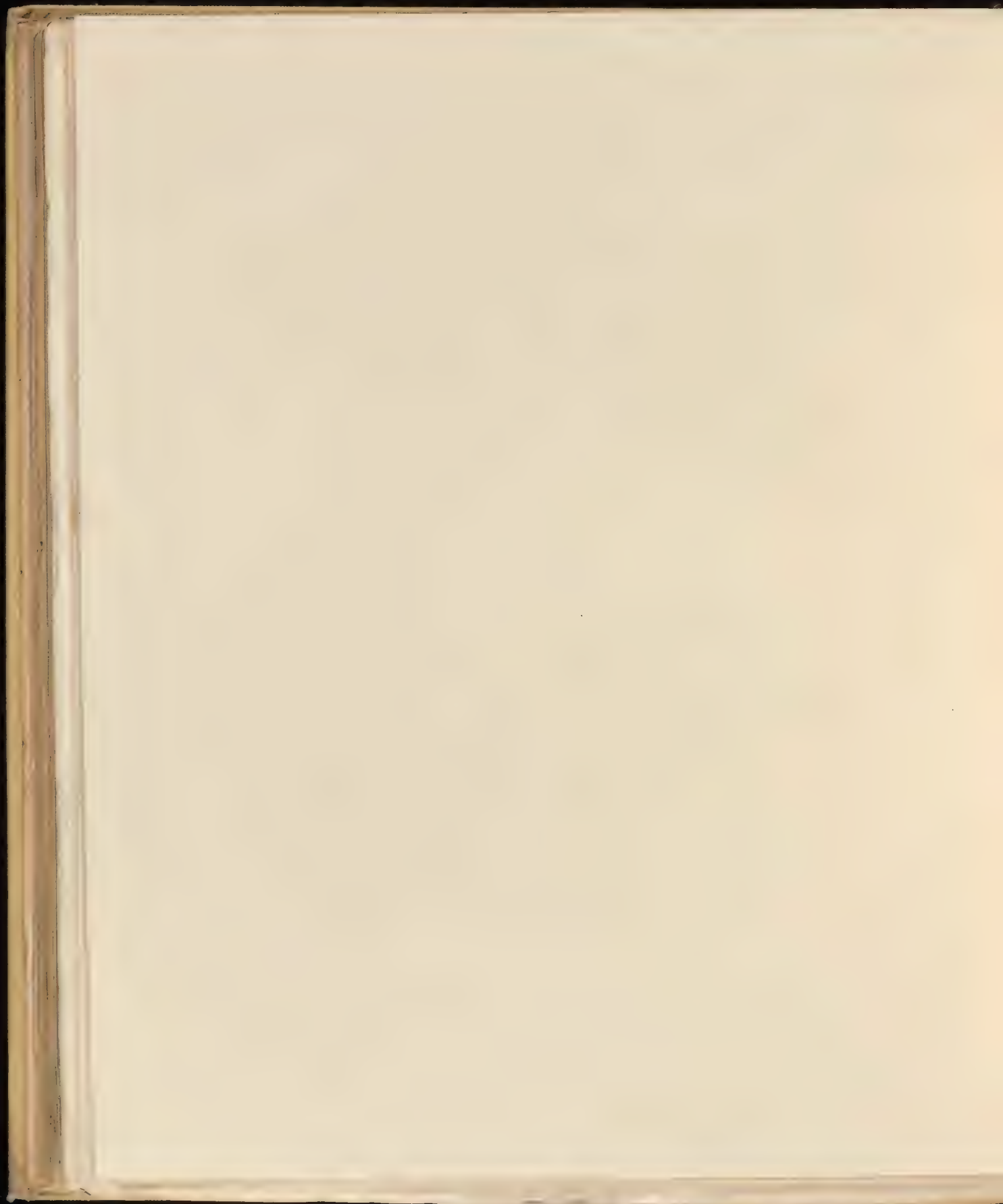
Ary Scheffer, when Dickens was sitting to him for his portrait, said, "At this moment, *mon cher* Dickens, you look more like an energetic Dutch admiral than anything else." The painter had, to Dickens's immense amusement, previously expressed his surprise at finding so much of the mariner in the aspect of the author. If Turner had worn his hair long under a Spanish hat and flowing upon a velveteen coat he would, of course, have looked like an artist. Dickens doubtless disappointed the foreign idealist by not presenting to his gaze a romantic visage "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." And it is possible that the modern apparel of the author of "Pickwick" assisted in outraging the painter's preconceived image. Hamerton, one observes, adds "costermonger" to the "sailor" in the portrait he paints of Turner, and therefore perfects the degradation of the sitter. This is an ingenious way of debasing him even below the level of Wapping. In the annals of Art and Literature there are intrigues and intrigues, illicit connections and illicit connections. The inference to be drawn from the common indictment against Turner is that he missed tolerance by not choosing a woman of culture and position for his unconsecrated companionship. We are, by implication at any rate, admonished to "waive the quantum o' the sin," and denounce the vulgarity of the sinner. Such an alliance as that of Count d'Orsay and Lady Blessington, or an elopement with the Wife of Somebody in Society, or, in short (if we read the biographer aright), a liaison in high life would have been forgiven; but Turner's low delinquency—never! To be sure! Is it not our sacred duty to "frown upon St. Giles's sins, and blink the peccadilloes of all Piccadilly"?

Turner was a law unto himself. He sought no advice, listened to no counsel. He painted in solitude, with intruders barred out. He was his own critic, and when he blundered out those amazing fragments from an inchoate jumble which he called the "Fallacies of Hope," he had no editor, and brooked the interference of no corrector of the press. Otherwise the limping lumbering lines





*Italian Landscape*



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would either have been thrown into the fire, or licked into a passable shape, and emerged in print, respectable and therefore intolerable blank verse. Walter Thornbury, who was a versifier, could make neither head nor tail of the "Fallacies of Hope." Mr. W. M. Rossetti considered that Thornbury had taken too harsh a view of the effusions.

"You have painted the sails very black," said Stanfield to Turner when he saw "The Burial of Wilkie at Sea." "If I could paint them blacker than black, I would do so," was Turner's gruff reply. That ended the argument. It was Turner's realised vision, not Stanfield's or another's. They, however, were friends to the last, for they understood each other. It was Stanfield who, with a sympathetic comprehension of Turner's powers, drew his attention to the *Temeraire* when she was being tugged to her last berth, and said, "There's a subject for you." How he grasped with his own greatness, and flooded with his own poetry, the subject which Stanfield saw for Turner, but not with Turner's perception, is well known.

"Her day now draweth to its close  
With solemn sunset crowned;  
To death her crested beauty bows,  
The night is folding round  
Our good ship *Temeraire*.  
See her tugged to her last berth,  
The fighting *Temeraire*."<sup>1</sup>

He made hard bargains with engravers and publishers when his day of mastery came, but there had been a time when he was ground down and sweated, and the remembrance had soured his nature. Yet it was not at all a bad nature. His admiration of Girtin and Stothard was unbounded, and he was never known to say a splenetic thing of another painter's work. It is unwarrantable to assert that the more you dive into the history of Turner the worse, as a man, he appears. In his Lecture on "Turner and his

<sup>1</sup> "Turner's *Temeraire*," Gerald Massey.

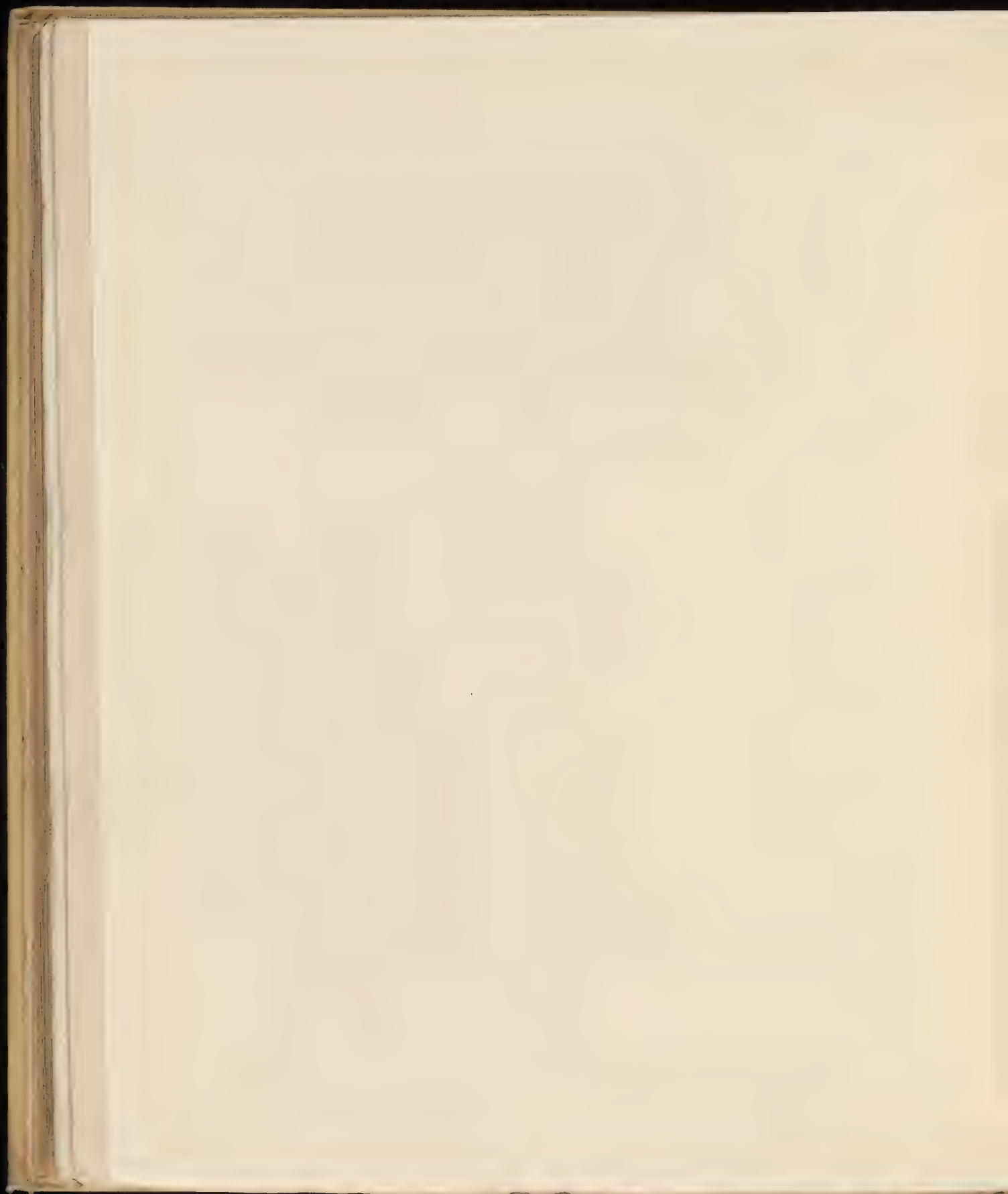
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Works," delivered at Edinburgh forty-five years ago, Mr. Ruskin, in two or three striking anecdotes, exhibits the kindly side of the painter's character. "Haydon," he says, "passed his whole life in war with the Royal Academy, of which Turner was one of the most important members. Yet in the midst of one of his most violent expressions of exultation at one of his victories over the Academy, he draws back suddenly with these words: 'But Turner behaved well, and did me justice.'" Again, "When Bird first sent a picture to the Academy, for exhibition, Turner was on the hanging committee. Bird's picture had great merit; but no place for it could be found. Turner pleaded hard for it. No, the thing was impossible. Turner sat down and looked at Bird's picture for a long time; then insisted that a place must be found for it. He was still met by the assertion of impracticability. He said no more, but took down one of his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung Bird's in its place." Self-effacement, the loss of a possible purchaser, and all to render a service to an outsider! There was humour—a strong trait in Turner's character, albeit its exhibition was not always discovered or understood—as well as delicate tenderness, in another instance of his self-abnegation. Mr. Ruskin relates the anecdote: "When Turner's picture of Cologne was exhibited in the year 1826, it was hung between two portraits, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Lady Wallscourt and Lady Robert Manners. The sky in Turner's picture was exceedingly bright, and it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits. Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and complained openly of the position of his pictures. On the morning of the opening of the exhibition, at the private view, a friend of Turner's, who had seen the Cologne in all its splendour, led a group of expectant critics up to the picture. He started back from it in consternation. The golden sky had changed to a dun colour. He ran up to Turner, who was in another part of the room: 'Turner, what *have* you been doing to your picture?' 'Oh,' muttered Turner in a low voice, 'poor Lawrence was so





THE EAST WALL OF STUDIO



## *James Orrock*

unhappy. It's only lamp-black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!' He had actually passed a wash of lamp-black in water-colour over the whole sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for a time, and so left it through the exhibition, lest it should hurt Lawrence's."

Of Turner's acts of private benevolence there are two substantial accounts. Assuming them to be substantially true, the trumpery tales of his meanness, the accuracy of which has never been questioned—how could it?—may be discarded as unindicative of his real character. These indeed were often no more than manifestations of a rough and at times uncouth humour. The story of his rising early and leaving his sluggard comrades to pay the tavern bill is a case in point. Taciturn as he was, he was the last man in the world to talk about his generosity. The declaration of it, therefore, made as it was by others who, we may be sure, were not concerned to make the best of him, may be relied on as fact. As we know from a variety of sources, it was the habit to deny or discredit any exhibition of warm-heartedness and generosity by a man who, in the common view, was as hard as flint. The good things that are said of him form a part, and a noble one, of the Turner tradition, and are at least to be accepted with the bad. There is nothing more beautiful in Turner's life, if it be rightly regarded, than the time he spent with his father in the dingy house in Queen Anne Street. It was a hugger-mugger existence, but they were perfectly happy in each other's society. The next successor to Thornbury amongst his biographers remarks that "When Turner became an Academician he took his old father away from his business of barber, and gave him a home in his own house. It is said that he was invariably kind and respectful to the old man, which we may easily believe, though there have been stories to the contrary, originating in the simple habits of both father and son."

We may be sure that the filial feeling operated principally in the promotion of this change, although it seems certain that

## *James Orrock*

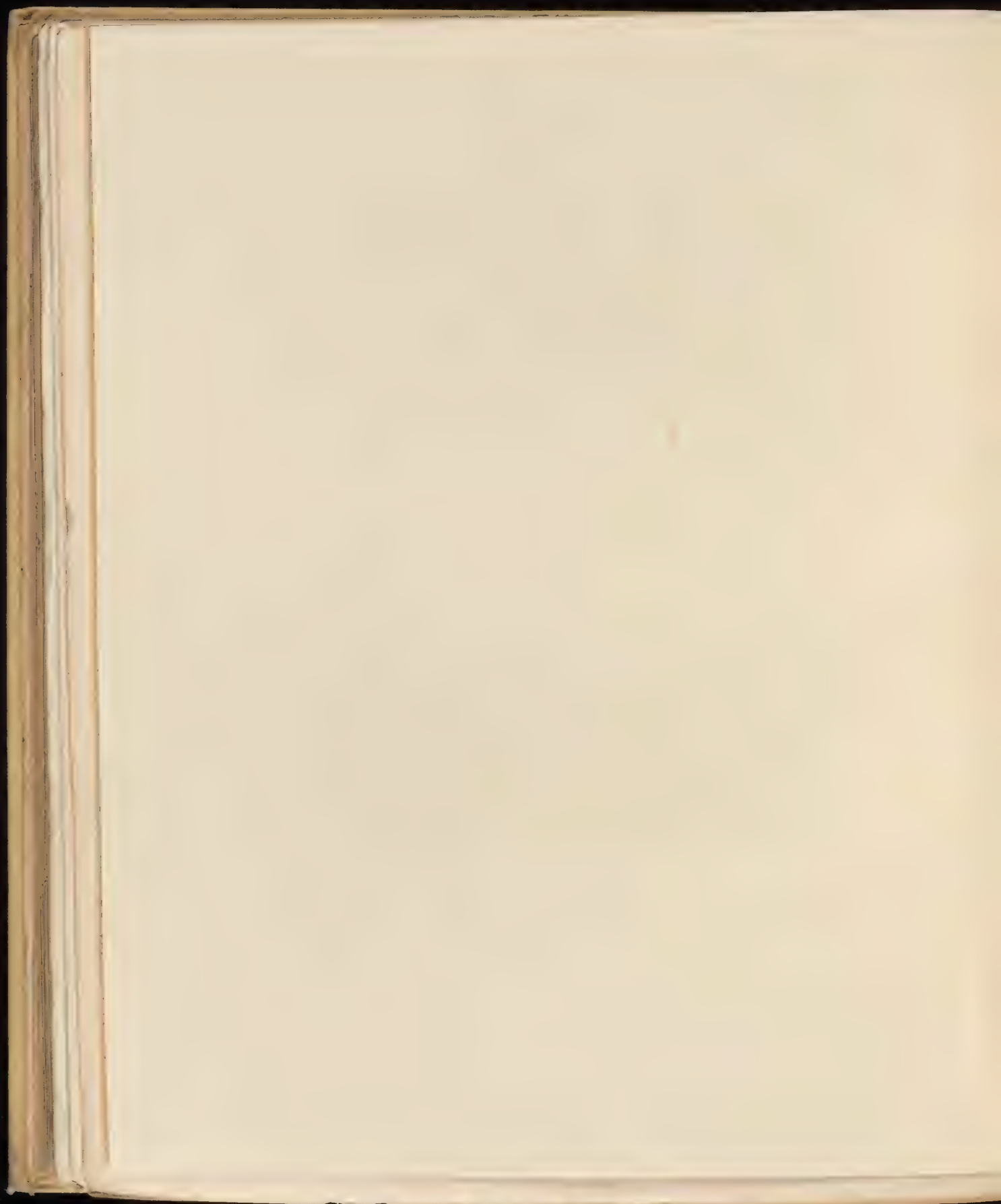
neither father nor son was blind to the thrift of the arrangement. Turner was, as far as is known of his childhood, more the son of the father than of the mother, of whom little or nothing has been disclosed beyond the fact that her mind was somewhat impaired. As Hamerton says, "Old William Turner had been industrious and economical all his life, and, like all old men who have been accustomed to work for a living, he felt the need of useful occupation. It is said that he acted as porter at his son's gallery, would stretch canvases for him, and do other little things, in all which there is certainly no real humiliation, but simply the gratification of an old man's wish to be useful. The relation between father and son is indeed quite the prettiest part of the life-story we have to tell. The artist was never hindered by his father, but aided by him in all possible ways with tender parental care and sagacious foresight. The son, on his part, was dutiful and filial to the last, taking the old man to his house, and drawing closer the bond of affection as the social distance between them became wider." It is not unreasonable to suppose that if we knew all we should find that the first person to whom Turner communicated the fact of his being made an R.A., over a bottle of port or sherry, was his dear old father. He declined to call and thank the electors in obedience to established usage. "If they had not been satisfied with my pictures," he said to Stothard, "they would not have elected me. Why, then, should I thank them? Why thank a man for performing a simple duty?" The death of the old man shattered Turner. He "felt like a father who had lost his only son." This was a touchingly true revelation of the relationship. In Turner's later and more prosperous days, the period of their unspeakably near communion, the position of father and son had been affectionately reversed.

In rejecting the common view of Turner's inconsiderate detractors, one is impelled to dwell upon those fine qualities in his nature that are never divorced from true greatness. Referring to a work by Girtin he said, "I never could make a drawing like





*Rev. Sir H. Wellwood-Moncrieff.*



## James Orrock

that. I would have given one of my little fingers to have made such a one." On the same subject he said, "Had Tom Girtin lived I should have starved." Another of his idols was Stothard. Leslie writes, "Turner proved the sincerity of his admiration by painting a picture in avowed admiration of him. While re-touching it in the Academy Turner said to me, 'If I thought he liked my pictures half as well as I like his, I should be satisfied. He is the Giotto of England.'" That he was fond of animals afforded another proof of his really gentle nature. When he lived at Sandycombe Lodge, Twickenham, he was known as "Old Blackbird," because he protected the nests of the blackbirds. He was at home with children, who were confidingly at home with him. In this connection, as well as for the odd light it throws on Turner's practice as a painter, the following story merits inclusion. Hamerton says:

"The late Mr. Cristall, a friend of Mr. Samuel Palmer, was also a guest at Knockholt at the same time, and he witnessed the following incident, which he afterwards narrated to Mr. Palmer. Turner had brought a drawing with him of which the distance was already carefully outlined, but there was no material for the nearer parts. 'One morning, when about to proceed with his drawing, he called in the children as *collaborateurs* for the rest, in the following manner. He rubbed three cakes of water-colour—red, blue, and yellow—in three separate saucers, gave one to each child, and told the children to dabble in the saucers and then play together with their coloured fingers on his paper. These directions were gleefully obeyed, as the reader may well imagine. Turner watched the work of the thirty little fingers with serious attention, and after the dabbling had gone on for some time, he suddenly called out "Stop!" He then took the drawing into his own hands, added imaginary landscape forms, suggested by the accidental colouring, and the work was finished. On another occasion, after dinner, he amused himself in arranging some many-coloured sugar-plums on a dessert plate, and when

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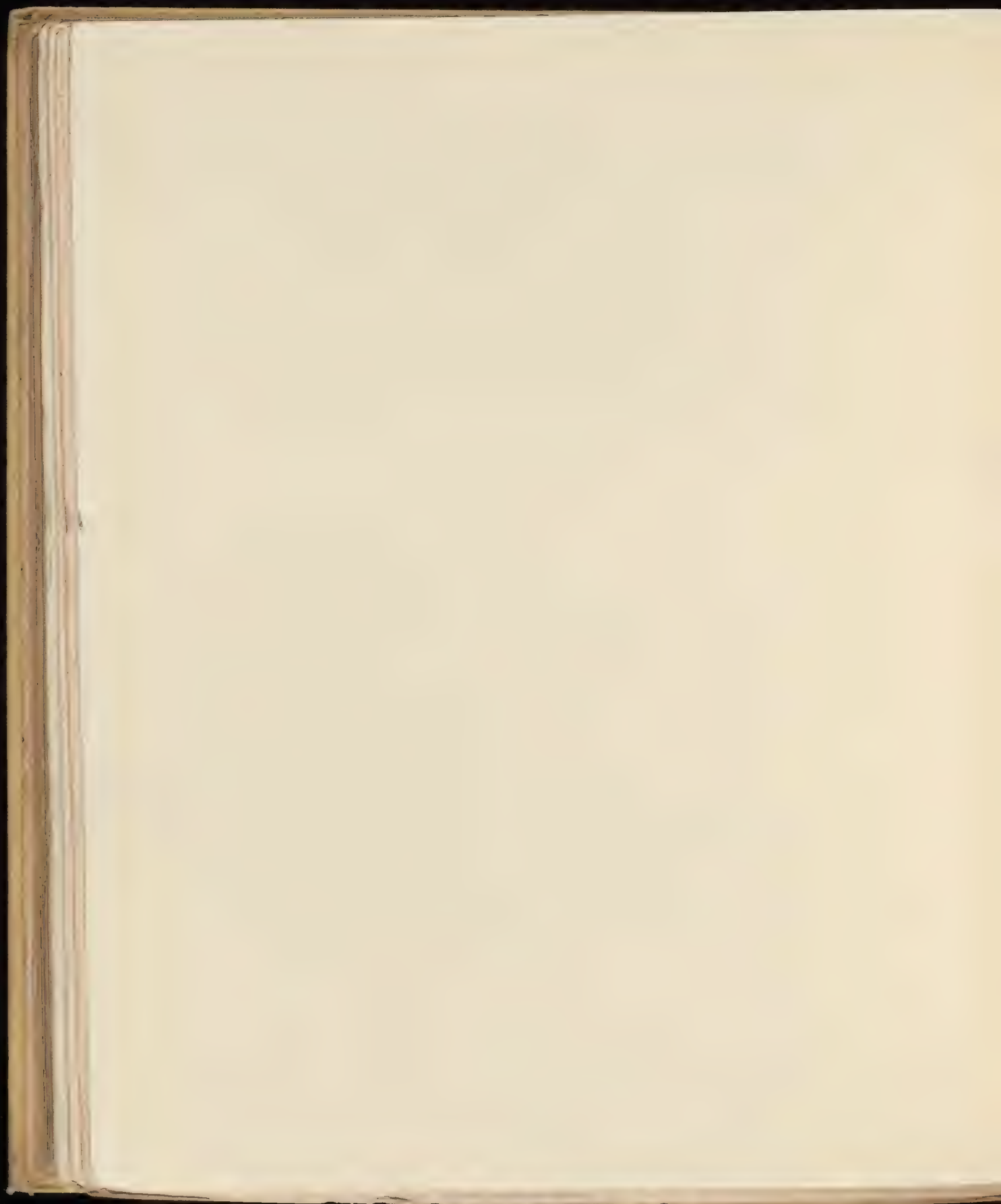
disturbed in the operation by a question, said to the questioner, "There! you have made me lose fifty guineas!" What relation had sugar-plums to landscape-painting? Simply this, that a landscape might have been afterwards invented in the same colour-arrangement. The sugar-plums would have been disguised in landscape forms in Turner's arbitrary way.'

Turner's humour was crude and his manner unpolished. But, Constable says, he had a great deal of good feeling about him. At Sir Thomas Lawrence's funeral he refused to notice Wilkie's remark, "That is a fine effect." He felt the solemnity of the occasion if the painter of "The Blind Fiddler" did not, and merged the painter in the man. Thomson of Duddingston had a taste of his humour when he showed the greater artist his drawings. After examining them in silence Turner said, "You beat me—in frames." Howard maintained that artists ought to paint for the public, but Turner took the opposite view, and held that "public opinion was not worth a rush, and that one should paint only for the judges." His sensitiveness to what the newspaper critics said of him was no doubt in some degree owing to a rooted conviction that they were not among "the judges." As has been related, "The Snow-Storm" (1842) afforded the critics a precious opportunity for the exercise of their craft. They called it "soap-suds and whitewash," the real subject being a steamer in a storm off a harbour-mouth making signals and going by the lead. In this instance nothing could be more serious than Turner's intention, which was to render a storm as he had seen it one night when the *Ariel* left Harwich. Like Joseph Vernet, who, when in a storm off the island of Sardinia, had had himself fastened to the mast to watch the effects, Turner, on this occasion, got the sailors to lash him to the mast to observe it, and remained in that position for four hours. He did not expect to escape, but had a curious sort of conscientious feeling that it was his duty to record his impression if he survived. The picture, then, was serious in purpose, and not an invention, but a recollection of





FRONT DRAWING-ROOM: PERGOLESÌ CABINET



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real nature. Turner was much hurt by the soapsuds and whitewash criticism. "He was passing the evening at my father's house," says Mr. Ruskin, "on the day this criticism came out; and after dinner, sitting in his arm-chair, I heard him muttering low to himself at intervals, 'soapsuds and whitewash!' again and again and again. At last I went to him asking, 'why he minded what they said?' Then he burst out, 'Soapsuds and whitewash! What would they have? I wonder what they think the sea's like? I wish they'd been in it.'"

The Turner who made himself very social in Rome, and seemed to enjoy himself with the artists with whom he foregathered; the Turner who Lupton the engraver says was "among his social friends always entertaining, quick in reply, and very animated and witty in conversation," and "who was well read in the poets;" the Turner whom Vernon Heath<sup>1</sup> (nephew of Robert Vernon) found a "good conversationalist, full of information that was interesting and instructive, and good at repartee," one takes to have been most like the real Turner, after all. He had a temper that was not habitually serene, and his manners were the reverse of courtly. Of him in his social relations no more need be said. To glimpses of him at work and in association with his brethren one or two additions may be made.

W. L. Leitch, a young man, and admittedly advancing in his profession, was on intimate terms with Pickersgill, who of course knew Turner. Pickersgill invited Leitch to his house to meet the great painter, but the young artist was diffident, not to say afraid, to encounter one whose reputation in art circles was not unlike that of Dr. Johnson amongst the literary men of his time. Pickersgill at length not only overcame Leitch's scruples, but also obtained his promise to bring some of his drawings to show the master. Accordingly Leitch repaired to Pickersgill's house, was introduced to Turner, and, after dinner, the portfolio of draw-

<sup>1</sup> Vernon Heath's "Recollections" (Cassell & Co.).

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ings was produced, and one by one Turner examined them. He pursued his inspection for some time in silence. At length he paused before a certain drawing, a night view in an Italian city. It was what might be termed a Turner subject, treated in Leitch's broad and effective manner—a view, and yet at the same time an idealised composition. After examining the work for some moments, Turner said abruptly, "Did you do this?" Leitch replied that it was his own work. "I don't believe a word of it!" was Turner's rejoinder, at the same time shutting up the portfolio. Leitch was struck dumb. Turner, on his part, contributed nothing further to the conversation, and soon afterwards withdrew. When he had gone Leitch timidly asked his host what had offended Turner, and whether he had driven him off? "Dear me, no," said Pickersgill; "you may not think it, but in his way he was paying you a compliment. Your drawing, you know, is a Turner drawing in composition, in lighting, in treatment. He is convinced, rightly or wrongly, that he inspired it." Which Leitch admitted to Mr. Orrock was extremely likely, for he was constantly studying Turner's works. He denied, however, that he had had any particular picture of Turner's in his mind. The foregoing anecdote of Turner was related to Mr. Orrock by Leitch himself during one of the master's lessons.

Some years ago Woolner, who was a member of the Urban Club, invited Mr. Orrock to be his guest on an occasion when he was the appointed chairman of the evening. Another guest was the late Mr. Graves, the well-known picture-dealer and print-seller. The host, with their cordial approval, placed Messrs. Graves and Orrock together, and as it happened the conversation settled on Turner. Mr. Graves was cheerily communicative, and full of his subject, to the delight of his sympathetic auditor. They talked more of the art and the pictures painted by the master than of the man, but here and there a reference to an odd characteristic





SIX-SWIFT MILL, NEAR LEWES. (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH.) 1899.



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or an eccentric habit cropped up that left an anything but unfavourable impression on Mr. Orrock's mind. Turner enjoyed a good English dinner, and his own share, which was an old-fashioned Englishman's, of a bottle of port or sherry. It was his custom for a considerable period to dine with Mr. Graves every alternate Sunday night, and he was ever an agreeable and welcome guest. On one occasion Graves informed Turner that he had sold an oil-picture of his called "The Temple of Jupiter." Turner pondered for a few moments, and then said he did not recollect which of his pictures his host referred to. Turner then asked for a sheet of paper. This was handed to him, and he proceeded to make a rapid sketch of what he conceived to be the work in question. Mr. Graves glanced at the sketch, which was clear, bold, and beautiful, and said, "Yes, that is the identical picture." In due time the cloth was removed by the maid-servant, and with it Turner's sketch. In subsequently taking his leave Mr. Graves said, "Then I shall see you again on this day fortnight." Turner wished him "Good-night," but paused on the order of his going and kept looking about him. Thinking that he had mislaid something Mr. Graves said, "What are you looking for?" "The sketch which I just now made," was the reply. The servant was recalled, a search was made, and the missing sheet of paper was discovered in the sideboard drawer. Without another word Turner placed the sketch in the lining of his hat, covered his head, took his umbrella, and departed.

In default of a more appropriate place, Tennyson's opinion of Turner the painter, almost anywhere in these pages germane to the matter, may come in here and complete the chapter. It is remarkable, not only for its insight, but because it answers succinctly objections that have been unintelligently urged against the lack of topographical accuracy in Turner's depiction. Tennyson says, "Turner was an imaginative painter, and how absurd it would be to account for some of his works. There may be

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special suggestions." Poet and painter pursued the like method. "There was a period in my life," says Tennyson, "when, as an artist, Turner, for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, &c., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature."







*Going to the Hayfield.*

## CHAPTER VII

The 1899 Loan Collection of Turner's works at the Guildhall—Mr. A. G. Temple's enlightened policy—Mr. Orrock's critical notes—The two "Kilgarran Castles"—Both by Turner—Turner's peculiar practice evident in the "Kilgarran" in question—Turner's two "Berwicks"—The "Kilgarran Castle" impaired by an ignorant cleaner—Lord Iveagh's charming "Fisherman on a Lee Shore"—Sir Donald Currie's "Victory"—Other famous and representative works—"Newark Abbey," a picture with a history—Turner's method exemplified in the "Barnes Terrace" and companion picture—"The Wreck Buoy"—A curious mistake—The water-colours—Studies of dead game—Turner's matchless greatness in the water-colour medium—"The Falls of Terni," "Pembroke Castle," "Ingleborough," "The Crook of Lune"—Mr. Ruskin's contributions to the water-colour exhibition—His remarks—Mr. Orrock's summing up—"This collection ought to belong to the nation"—Another gird at the "golden-gloried saints"—Tribute to Mr. Temple, and to Mr. Rawlinson for his exhibited selection from the *Liber Studiorum*—The famous "Rockets and Blue Lights"—Mr. Day's chromolithograph—A perilous adventure.

IN the 1899 Loan Collection of Pictures and Drawings by J. M. W. Turner, R.A., exhibited, with a Selection of Pictures by some of his contemporaries, at the London Guildhall, Mr. Orrock naturally took the warmest interest. He contributed from his own collection of the works of the English Masters a Turner and a Morland. Mr. A. G. Temple, F.S.A., Director of the Art Gallery of the Corporation of London, has abundant cause for satisfaction in the success of the Guildhall Exhibitions. He is sustained by the Library Committee, a most powerful and, as recent history has proved, an enlightened body of the City Fathers, of which the reigning Lord Mayor is the head, and Mr. A. H. Barber the working chairman. Statistics prove that in catering for a public which, to a considerable extent, had to be made and educated, Mr. Temple and his committee were, like many art managers, happier in hitting the popular taste with one exhibition than they were with another. They have had, however, with their admirable director, the gratification of knowing

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that the information of that taste by the best and purest means has proceeded without intermission ever since the exhibitions were established. In the annual recurrence of these we perceive and welcome the spirit of the promoters, while we are at the same time drawn to a recognition of the fact that in the Guildhall Permanent Gallery, which lies at the foundation of the Art movement east of Temple Bar, the City possesses an institution of the greatest possible value, and one that might, if guild and citizen willed it, rival the most famous civic galleries of the Low Countries. The Turner Exhibition at the Guildhall consisted of no haphazard collection of the great painter's works. On the contrary, while unfolding the wondrous range of his genius, it put forth and marked all the stages with the most remarkable proofs of it, thereby writing, as it were, the history of his work on the walls. Mr. Temple's descriptive and biographical notes, prefacing the catalogue, provided lucidly informative guidance to the observer. The receptive visitor who studied the Loan Collection at the Guildhall, after perusing Mr. Temple's "Brief Notice of Turner's Work," was likely to know more about the painter's methods and their fruit than he had gathered from a hundred sources before. Collections get dispersed and catalogues disappear. It is repeating the baldest truism to say that such an assemblage of Turner's works as that brought together by Mr. Temple will never be grouped again. Pictures and drawings change hands, and not every English possessor of such rare things is generous enough to lend them for repeated public exhibition. Then there is an American buyer in the market to whom price is no object. Some of the most precious examples of English art are crossing the Atlantic to embellish the growing galleries of the American millionaire. Mr. Orrock, encouraged in carrying the idea into effect by the entreaties of brethren in art, has felt impelled to place upon permanent record his views of this great Guildhall Exhibition, which are as follow :—

"The Turner Exhibition at the Guildhall (1899) has done more



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for the display of his matchless genius than any of our national exhibitions can pretend to accomplish. Here we behold the great master chronologically illustrated by superb examples from his earliest down to his latest time, these comprising a fine series of the *Liber Studiorum*. He began by producing drawings of the lightest class, which for the subtle delineation of architecture, shipping, trees, and water have never been approached, much less equalled. Hand in hand with this exquisite living work in water-colour marched his manly accomplishment in oil, which for grandeur of design, especially in marine subjects, mighty colour, chiaroscuro, and aerial perspective, set Turner above all painters in this field of the Art. From the most delicate tones to the strongest he shows himself *the* master. To begin at the beginning respecting this exhibition. It has been publicly stated that the two pictures (1. 'Kilgarran Castle on the Twyvey,' lent by H. L. Bischoffsheim, Esq., and 3. 'Kilgarran,' lent by Lord Armstrong, C.B.) are by different masters. They are the same size, 36 x 48 inches. Now, Munro of Novar, the original owner of Lord Armstrong's picture, was hardly the man to have a 'false' Turner in his possession. He was one of Turner's intimate friends, and he acquired and preserved many of his most suitable works. 'The Trossachs,' which I have the honour to possess, came from the Munro collection, and I may remark that one of the newspaper critics, when the picture was exhibited some years ago at the Old Masters' Exhibition at Burlington House, declared, with airy confidence, that the landscape was by Richard Wilson. One who had lived for years with examples of both masters, and who knew the characteristics of their work by heart, could only compassionate such ignorance. However, to revert to No. 3, Lord Armstrong's picture. It is certainly less rich and luminous than most of the paintings which the artist executed at that period, but, personally, I fail to discover the touch of any other hand than Turner's on the canvas. Having lived, as I have before observed, with the master's pictures for years, I have unceasingly compared them—I could

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not help doing so—with others. This is a Turner, and there is, to my mind, one infallible sign that it is by him. He, to obtain the feeling of air, especially in the middle-distance, almost habitually sprinkled powdered plaster, or a like disintegrating substance, over parts of the canvas, upon which he had placed some vehicle, and left the surface to dry and harden, like sandpaper. He then painted upon it whatever object he wished, and, when the work was nearly finished, he removed or swept off the surface colour, and left the minute, sand-like particles which he had previously placed on the surface. He had, to put it otherwise, 'rough-cast' the picture, especially the middle-distance and the distance, with myriads of sand-like particles. His object was to produce 'atmosphere' in all parts of the picture so treated. I know of no other painter who pursued this practice. Müller, it is true, used ground-up plaster-casts in his pigment for a like purpose, but his practice was essentially different. The powdered plaster was placed in a pot into which he dipped his brush while he painted. The particles are therefore never visible in Müller's pictures, as they invariably are in Turner's at this period of his work. In the No. 3, 'Kilgarran,' crowds of these air-producing particles can be perceived.

"Again, it has been asserted that Turner never essentially repeated himself, or made a slavish copy of any of his own work. This statement, true in the main, is not absolutely correct, as a case within my own experience shows. Some years ago Mr. Lassels, an architect of my acquaintance, showed me, at his house in Edinburgh, the exquisite Turner drawing which was known as the 'Berwick' of the Scott series. Mr. Lassels assured me that this was the drawing that had been engraved in the series named, and, of course, I accepted his statement as accurate. A short time afterwards I paid a visit, with Sir Fettes Douglas, the President of the Royal Scottish Academy, to the late Mr. Findlay, the proprietor of the *Scotsman*, who showed me apparently the same drawing of 'Berwick.' Mr. Findlay, however, to my amazement,

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proved that this was another 'Berwick.' For some unknown reason Turner had painted two 'Berwicks,' one of which was a perfect reflex of the other. As to Lord Armstrong's picture, in my opinion there was only one man who might *possibly* have painted 'Kilgarran' No. 3, and that was Thomson of Duddingston, who was called 'The Scottish Turner,' and who worshipped the great master. Munro, no doubt, knew Thomson, and probably introduced him to Turner.

"It may be added that the No. 3 'Kilgarran' has been shamefully scoured by some turps-man, as may be discerned in the rubbing out of the dark tree-tops on the ridge of the left-hand hill, by which senseless and even criminal operation the scrubber has actually exposed the heavy impasto painting of the sunset sky. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the whole work has been deprived of the glazings which were in Turner's work when it left his easel. However, be this as it may, I, founding my opinion on my intimate knowledge and long experience of the master's work, feel persuaded that the picture is a Turner whose fine qualities have been impaired by the hand of some ignoramus of a restorer. As the painting is an old one, no living man need lay claim to its execution. Had it not been 'skinned' and otherwise drastically treated, it would probably have had the tone which is lacking, one which characterises those surrounding it on the walls of the Guildhall collection.

"On certain of the works in this Turner collection, which in its representative completeness and value can never again be equalled, I desire to make some comments. I begin with—

No. 1. *Kilgarran Castle on the Twyvey*. Painted 1799. Canvas 36 × 48 inches. Lent by H. L. Bischoffsheim, Esq.

A magnificent composition of massing, colour, chiaroscuro, and grand pictorial effect. Perhaps nothing in art has shown the maturity of genius at so early an age as Turner displayed when this picture was painted.

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No. 2. *Dunstanborough Castle: Morning after Storm.* Painted about 1802. Canvas  $18\frac{1}{2} \times 28$  inches. Lent by Messrs. Dowdeswell.

An equally matured work, but the upright mass of dark rock stops the picture. This is faulty composition, and very unusual. Moreover, it is to some extent topographically wrong. At Dunstanborough (where I have frequently painted) the rocks partake of the character of boulders, and do not betray the cliff formation upon which the castle stands. This caprice or departure is rare with Turner, who was, in respect of the leading characteristics of the scenes which he depicted, singularly accurate.

No. 6. *Conway Castle.* Painted about 1802. Lent by the Duke of Westminster.

The year 1802 was that of his election as R.A., when he was twenty-seven years old. A wondrous picture this for colour, tone, and composition, but, above all, for grandeur and style.

No. 7. *Fishermen on a Lee Shore in Squally Weather.* Painted 1802. Canvas  $35\frac{1}{2} \times 48$  inches. Lent by Lord Iveagh, K.P.

One of the most charming of all Turner's marine pictures. Abounding in life and action, and peculiarly graceful in composition. How skilfully he has massed up like a bulwark that Dutch boat to the right by way of support to the pictorial plan, as well as in contrast to the—for him—busy fishing-boats in the middle of the scene! Splendid in tone and rich colouring, and the whole rightly concentrated. The white flag denotes a fresh gale, while it acts as a foil to the sombre tones of the whole design. The sea-drawing, too, as is customary with Turner, is superb.

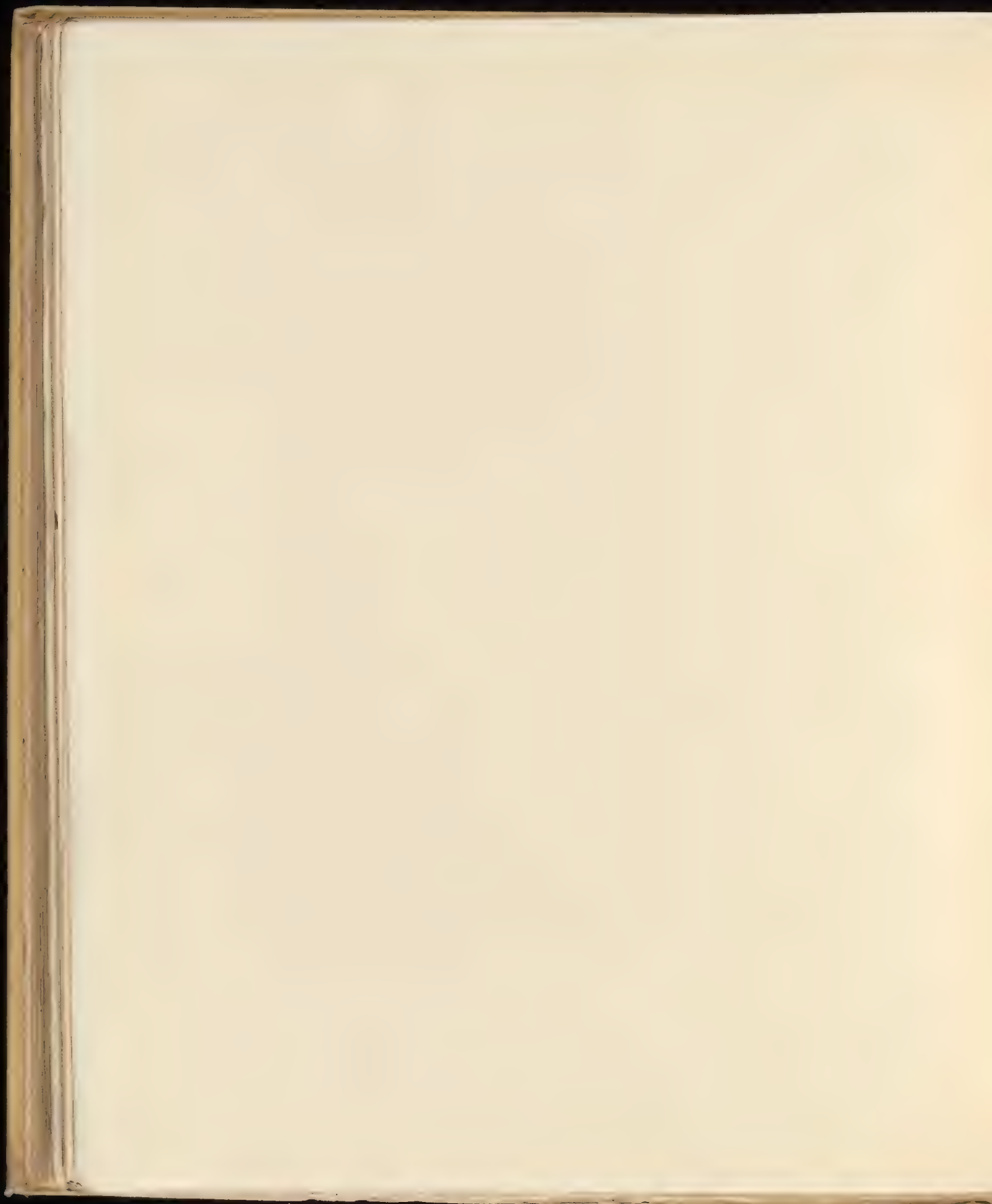
No. 8. *Boats carrying out Anchors and Cables to Dutch Men-of-War,* in 1665. Painted 1804. Canvas  $40 \times 51$  inches. Lent by Sir Horatio Davies, K.C.M.G., M.P.

A prodigious picture, which shows Turner in the pride of his strength at the time he painted "The Shipwreck" in the National Gallery, "Calais Pier," &c. Here again the composition, at least as to colour, is gathered up in a white flag. What a splendid performance this is! In relation to the master hand, all the marine painters who lived before him, or who have lived since, do not count. There is Turner, and Turner only!





CORNER OF FRONT DRAWING-ROOM  
*With Pergolesi Cabinet and Chair and Powder Blue Bottles*



## James Orrock

No. 10. *The 'Victory' returning from Trafalgar, beating up Channel, in three positions.* Painted 1806. Canvas 26 × 39 inches. Lent by Sir Donald Currie, K.C.M.G., M.P.

If we were to select a painting to prove Turner's knowledge of marine architecture and his supreme drawing and modelling of ships, this might be accepted as an example. The ship—the *Victory*, of course—beating up Channel with her broadside towards us, for character, proportion, and surpassing delicacy of colour and delight defies prosaic description. You can only extol as you gaze, and marvel at the performance of the magic pencil. The design is triply divided by the three ships, which gives the composition a formal appearance very unlike Turner. It is true that he has broken the formality by placing some fishing-boats near to the right-hand vessel, but, nevertheless, the staring facts of the three-part composition assert themselves in un-Turneresque fashion.

No. 12. *The Trout Stream.* Painted about 1807. Canvas 36 × 48 inches. Lent by Abel Buckley, Esq.

One of the famous Essex Turners. There were three, namely, "The Walton Bridges," the picture named above (No. 12), and No. 15. All these works are in Turner's best manner. "The Trout Stream" is the most poetic landscape imaginable, so English, so delicious! It takes you among the Westmorland and Yorkshire hills and dales. You breathe the scented hayfields and meadow-sweet!

No. 13. *The Windmill and Lock.* Painted 1806. Canvas 36 × 48 inches. Lent by Sir Francis Cook, Bart.

This is another splendid picture, and is especially interesting because it is the original of the Windmill in the *Liber Studiorum*. Mr. Ruskin singled it out to illustrate Turner's extreme care in his study of objects. Stress is laid by the eloquent critic on the artist's beautiful drawing of the sails of the mill, showing how these were adapted to catch the breeze, as an oar catches the water. Rembrandt's Mill has not the gradation or aerial perspective, or the sweet and pure summer glow which breathes through this beautiful work.

No. 15. *The Nore.* Painted 1808. Canvas 35 × 48 inches. Lent by J. Howard McFadden, Esq.

One of the Essex trio already mentioned. Here again we have an example of Turner's knowledge of shipping. The composition is simply perfect, and beyond all men.

## James Orrock

No. 16. *Sheerness*. Painted 1805. Canvas  $40\frac{1}{2} \times 57\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by Lord Wantage, V.C., K.C.B.

A dream of tone and wealth of colour. Again, as a matter of course, masterly warship drawing, but the massive contrast of the rich golden sail of the fishing-boat to the line-of-battle ship on the left, and the un-sailed fishing-boats on the right, form a masterpiece of inventive composition.

No. 17. *Somer Hill*. Painted 1810. Canvas  $35 \times 47\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by Ralph Brocklebank, Esq.

A triumph of pictorial arrangement as to the portraiture of noble mansions. Turner, when he was in the vein, could distance all painters of stately parks and houses. This picture is a pretty Turner, although not for such as us.

No. 18. *Newark Abbey, on the Wye*. Painted 1815. Canvas  $35 \times 49\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by James Orrock, Esq., R.I.

A Turner with a history. It was painted for Sir John Leicester, a connoisseur and amateur who lived at Tabley House, Cheshire. It afterwards came into the possession of Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., who was one of the best judges and painters of his time. As fine as Rembrandt, but, to repeat a former observation of mine in the same connection, with more atmosphere and silvery tone. The willow trees are of the *Liber* type, and, as usual, bear testimony to the fact that Turner had carefully studied their character for the expression of grace and elegance. He gives us here, as in the *Liber* and in other landscapes, an object-lesson in the anatomy of the branches, from their bifurcation to their terminals. I must be pardoned for my enthusiastic admiration of this noble picture, but I *know* it, and have lived with it for years.

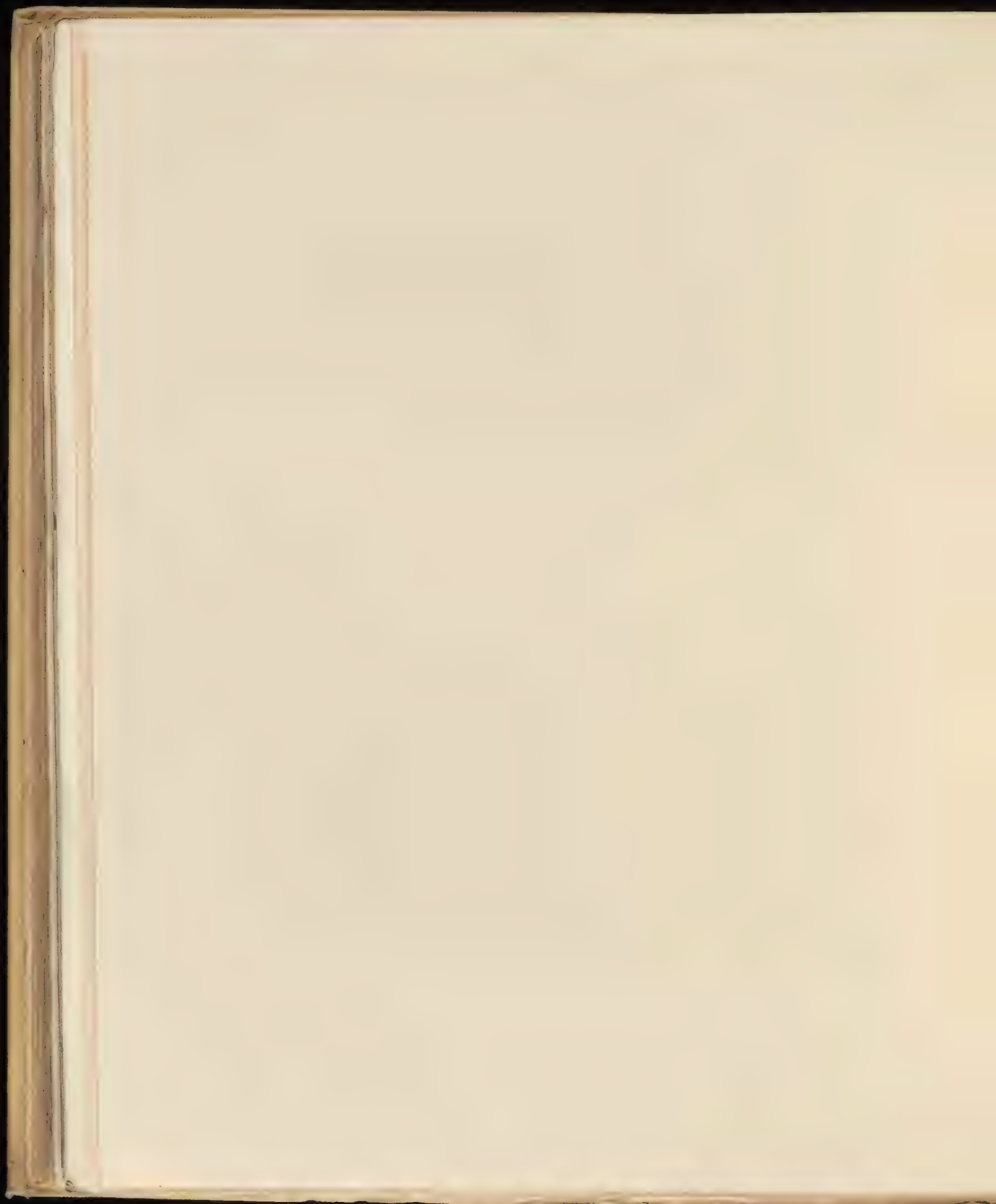
No. 19. *Walton Bridges*. Painted about 1815. Canvas  $29\frac{1}{2} \times 48$  inches. Lent by Lord Wantage.

One of Turner's best pictures in the period. While, however, it is full of light and air, and displays masterly technique throughout, the composition is overcrowded with incident. The number as well as the size of the cattle disturb the repose of the scene. This is an unusual feature in the painter's scenery. The "Walton Bridges" of the Lord Essex trio is much grander, being more simple in masses, and more beautiful in line.





*Walton Bridges.*



## James Orrock

No. 20. *Mercury and Hersé*. Painted 1811. Canvas 75 × 63 inches.  
Lent by Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., M.P.

A companion to "Crossing the Brook" in the National Gallery. A classic work of great consequence, but not a picture that vibrates with nature.

No. 21. *Ivy Bridge, Devonshire*. Painted 1812. Canvas 35 × 47 inches.  
Lent by Messrs. T. Agnew & Sons.

A splendid artistic discourse on streams, rocks, and graceful trees; full of colour; with a commanding Turner composition. Luminous and pure.

No. 22. *Mortlake*. Painted 1827. Canvas 35 × 47 inches. Lent by  
Stephen G. Holland, Esq.

What can be said about this picture and its companion—

No. 23. *Barnes Terrace?* Painted 1827. Canvas 36 × 48 inches. Lent  
by Mrs. Ashton.

Turner is now resolved to rival in oil the brilliancy and light of his water-colours. This he feels assured can only be effected upon a thickly-prepared white ground, as pure as paper or as porcelain. He prepared the grounds himself, and frequently painted on them in water-colour impasto. He painted, as in water-colour, chiefly with body-colour, and finished up with oil-colour and medium. Several of these delicious pictures have suffered from being exposed in dry-heat galleries; detached pieces here and there falling from the canvas. The "Landing of the Prince of Orange," now in the National Gallery, the "Regatta at Cowes," "Yarmouth," and some others in our national collections have sustained serious injury from the like cause. I am glad to acknowledge that the evil in question is abating; a wiser system of heating our public galleries having been adopted. The pictures are at length able to breathe. With glass upon them they will, one hopes, be as safe from deterioration in our public galleries as they have been hitherto in private dwellings. The impaired pictures I have mentioned—those in the National Gallery and South Kensington—have been renovated, the fallen pieces having been skilfully restored. It is gratifying to note that Nos. 22 and 23 are in as good a state apparently as they were when they left the painter's easel. Personally I feel that these two pictures, and some others of the same period of Turner's art, are in their way the most marvellous productions in the world. Nothing can exceed the palpitating light and air expressed in these two works. The peculiar grace of the compositions,

## James Orrock

which exhibit corresponding treatment; the fascinating and unusual introduction of trees in a row rising from a straight wall, are Turner all over. The wall-lines are skilfully broken, and the trees have stems between which the spectator gazes upon and enjoys the sunlit river scenery beyond. The black dog upon the wall, placed there to break the formality of the straight line, has its own romance, as everybody knows. Like the hoop and the white dog, it has a necessary artistic duty to perform. To possess and abide with these two pictures would indeed be a privilege! They are glorious symphonies in gold and silver. Perhaps the latter is the more exquisite of the pair.

No. 25. *The Rape of Europa*. Painted about 1836. Canvas 36 × 48 inches. Lent by Walter R. Cassels, Esq.

No. 26. *Rosenau, the Seat of H.R.H. Prince Consort, near Coburg, Germany*. Painted 1841. Canvas 38 × 49 inches. Lent by Mrs. George Holt.

No. 30. *Mercury and Argus*. Painted 1836. Canvas 59 × 43 inches. Lent by Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.

No. 32. *Venice. The Giudecca. Santa Maria della Salute, and San Giorgio Maggiore*. Painted 1841. Canvas 24 × 36 inches. Lent by Sir Donald Currie.

No. 33. *Ehrenbreitstein*. Painted 1835. Canvas 36½ × 48½ inches. Lent by Thomas Brocklebank, Esq.

These five pictures belong to Turner's prepared-ground period of painting, and are exceedingly lovely. They are visions indeed! We feel as we gaze entranced that Turner must himself have seen them.

No. 30 and 35. *Proserpine. The Plains of Enna*. Painted 1839. Canvas 35 × 47 inches. Lent by Edward Chapman, Esq., M.A., J.P.

These two are perhaps the most beautiful visions of all.

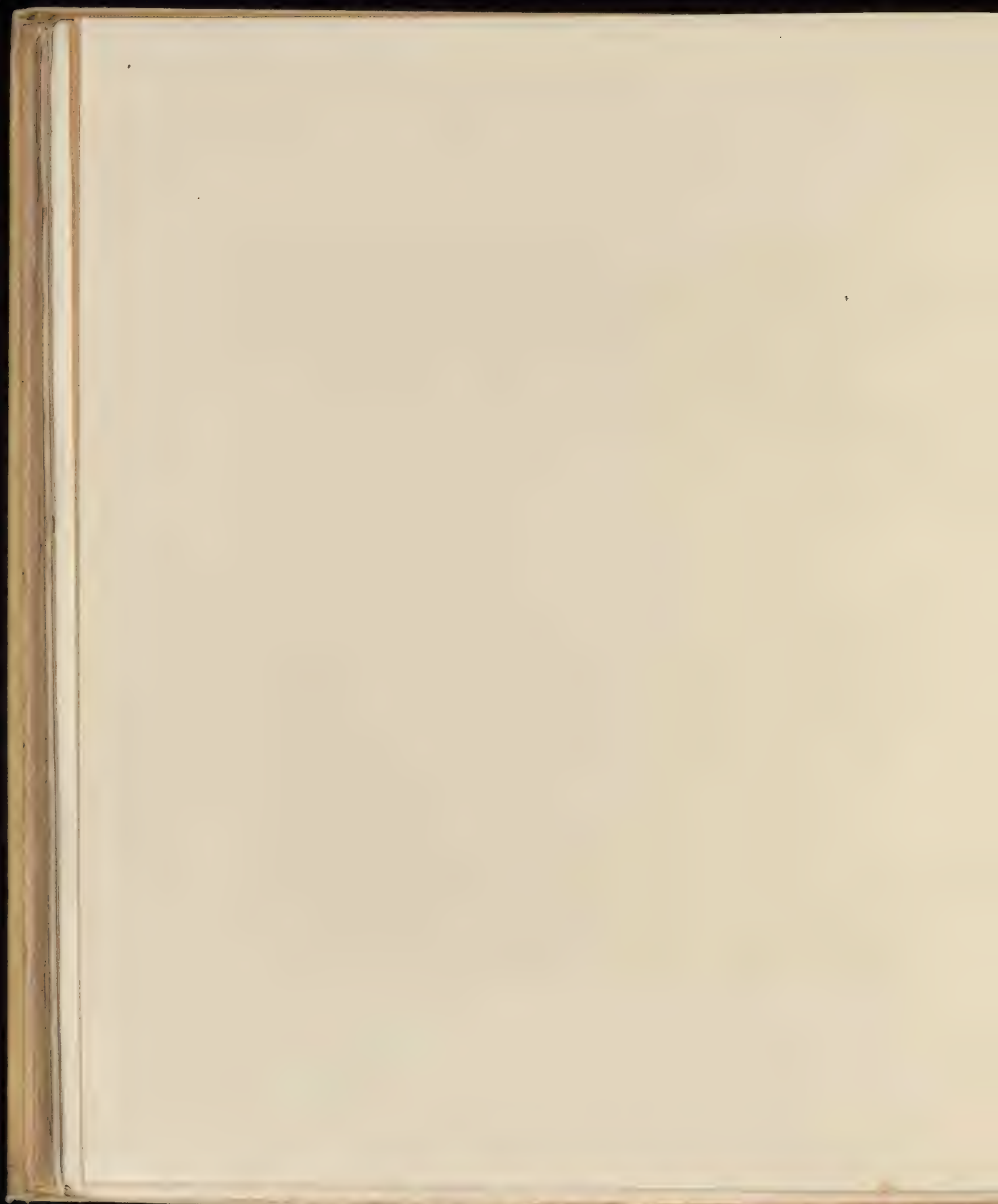
No. 37. *The Wreck Buoy*. Painted 1849. Canvas 37 × 48 inches. Lent by Mrs. George Holt.

This is a wonder, considering it was produced in Turner's extreme old age. Magnificent in colour, tone, and atmosphere. Perhaps, however, the red sail of the fishing-boat is too pronounced, but the silver, fairy-like tremble of the





*Rockets & Blue Lights  
warning Steamers off Wheel Water*



## James Orrock

other boats' white sails to some extent constitutes a foil to the red piece of canvas. There is a curious mistake in this work. The rainbow, we all know, is red on the outer edge, but when, as is depicted here, a double rainbow occurs, the reflected bow is red inside and not outside. Turner, with all his marvellous perception, had overlooked this fact in nature. The outer edge of both bows is red. But in the presence of such a poem of a picture one ought to feel ashamed of finding such hypercritical fault.

The water-colours by Turner at the Guildhall Exhibition were no doubt a revelation of his prodigiously varied powers and unparalleled range to all but the Turner devotee. Material varied and extensive enough to make the fame of a school of painters in water-colours might be found and classified on those walls. Perhaps the most striking feature in Turner's early water-colours is his exquisite drawing of architecture. It is said that he loved architecture first and shipping next. Certain it is that these—

No. 85. *Magdalen College and Bridge, Oxford.* Painted 1793.  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by the Trustees of the Manchester Whitworth Institute.

No. 90. *York Minster.* Painted 1800.  $12 \times 10$  inches. From the same collection.

No. 92. *Christchurch, Oxford, from the Fellows' Garden.* Painted 1796. Lent by the Rev. E. S. Dewick.

No. 105. *Chapter House, Salisbury.* Painted 1799.  $25 \times 20$  inches. From the Manchester Whitworth Institute.

No. 109. *Lady Chapel, Salisbury Cathedral.* Painted 1797.  $25\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Lent by Watson Fothergill, Esq.,

are far and away the loveliest things of the kind in the world. All other hands are heavy and gloved compared with the hands which made these drawings. There is only one thing on earth to equal such subtlety, and it can be seen in two examples of Gainsborough's wondrously tender and swift work in this same exhibition. I refer to the "View in the Mall, St. James's Park," lent by Sir Algernon W. Neeld, Bart., and the famous "Walk at Kew," from the Royal Collection. The clear colour of these five Turner drawings is also unique. In

No. 95. *Dead Blackcock.* Painted at Farnley Hall about 1807.  $10\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Lent by John Edward Taylor, Esq.

## James Orrock

No. 99. *Dead Grouse*. Same history and lender,

we behold Turner as a colourist and draughtsman of still-life. These studies of dead game are remarkably like early drawings by old William Hunt. Mr. Vokins once startled me by producing an album from Farnley which contained a large number of such studies, but having been intimately acquainted with William Hunt's early drawings, I at once said, "They must be Turners." The beaks of the birds and also the feet were one stage beyond even Hunt in subtle drawing and modelling and colour. The eight views of Scotland, commonly known as the Abbotsford Turners, on account of their having hung in the breakfast-room at Abbotsford, are in the artist's best manner, and, of course, supreme. Of the eight I would single out "Crichton Castle" and "Hawthornden."

No. 103. *The Falls of Terni*. Painted 1844.  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

If I could find words of my own to express a separate opinion of this drawing different from that recorded by Mr. Ruskin they should be employed. But I cannot. Like many another disciple of Turner, I have often felt my indebtedness to his enlightening and eloquent expositor when I lacked language to express my most deeply worshipful feelings. In the present instance let Mr. Ruskin speak for me on the subject of "The Falls of Terni." He writes, "Probably the most perfect piece of waterfall drawing in existence. The Reichenbach and the High Fall of Tees run it hard; but they both break more into foam, which is comparatively easy; while the subtlety of the drawing of the massy veil of water here shadowing the cliff is beyond all other conquest of difficulty supreme. For pure painting of light and mist also I know nothing like it, the rock drawing through the spray showing that the work is all straightforward, there is no sponging." Of

No. 111. *Lake of Narni*. Painted about 1818.  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

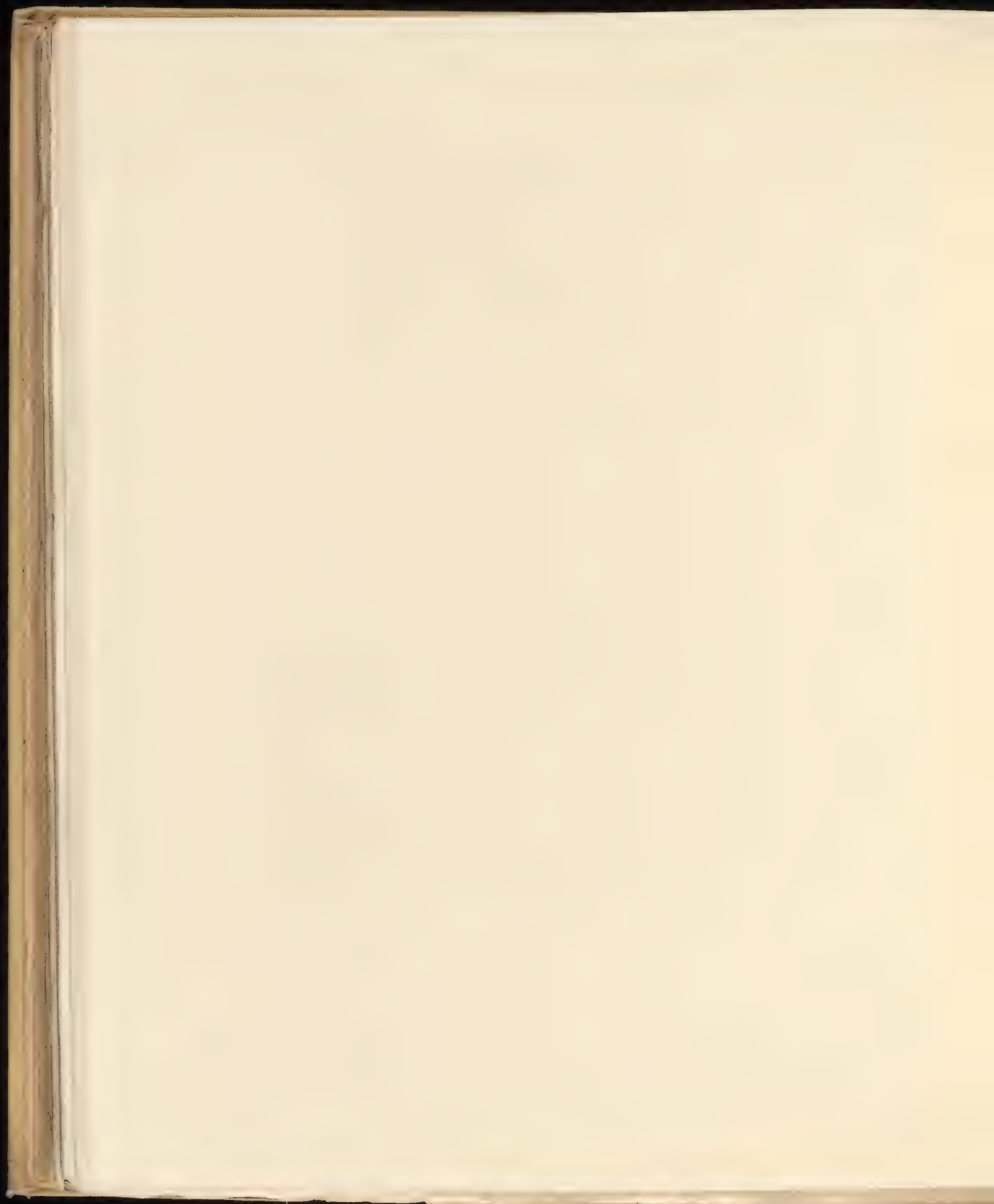
No. 112. *The Bridge of Narni*. The same size, &c.,

I have merely to observe that they are gems of drawings that will repay the most minute examination and the most careful study. They should be examined by the Turner devotee especially, with Mr. Ruskin's own remarks to illuminate the perception.





WEST WALL OF FRONT DRAWING-ROOM  
*Old English painted Satinwood Cabinet containing Powder Blue Nankin*



## *James Orrock*

No. 114. *Pembroke Castle. Clearing up of a Thunderstorm.* Painted 1806. 26 x 39 inches. Lent by Mrs. W. P. Miller.

What a grand picture! Nothing in landscape art could be more learned. The composition is Turner's own, and withal frank and easy in lines and quantities. After pausing with arrested attention on the solemn grandeur of the castle and the grouping of the shipping, our gaze is drawn with delight to the running sea and the perfectly picturesque foreground. On the right of the latter we have a boat in shade with figures, all of which form an important group. On the left, as a contrast, we have anchors and rudders, broken up and elegantly grouped, and the two features most skilfully united with a combination of fish and baskets, the fish in their silver colour and grace of form being invaluable to the composition. This effects two objects. First, it unites the two chief masses in the foreground, right and left, with a varied line, and, secondly, it repeats the silver tones of the water. The fish are as beautifully drawn as is the Farnley dead game. Than this there is not a finer drawing in the world.

No. 116. *Jerusalem: The Pool of Bethesda.* Painted 1835. 5½ x 8 inches. Lent by Arthur Severn, Esq., R.I.

No. 117. *Rome, from the Monte Mario.* Painted 1818. 5½ x 8½ inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

Both drawings from Brantwood, and each a gem of the finest quality. Mr. Ruskin has said the last word about them. We must pass by that mighty work,

No. 120. *The Devil's Bridge.* Painted 1804. 41½ x 29½ inches. Lent by Thomas Mackenzie, Esq.,

and pause at

No. 122. *Ingleborough, from Hornby Castle.* Painted 1816. 11½ x 16¾ inches. Lent by William Law, Esq.

No. 123. *The Crook of Lune.* Painted about 1820. 11½ x 16¾ inches. Lent by the Rev. William MacGregor.

Two of Turner's supreme works. Had he not executed such sensitive and delicious pictures in water-colours, he could never have painted his jewelled works in oil. One led him on by a process that may be called, in his case,

## James Orrock

a sort of transmutation in art, to the other. To extol the grace and beauty of these drawings were useless in the absence of the works themselves. They should be seen, and studied, and known. Perhaps "The Crook of Lune" is the loveliest of Turner's works. No man before him ever drew the character of the hills that we perceive in this drawing; and, assuredly, no man ever approached a depiction of the fulness and infinity of nature that he has here represented. This is Turner at his highest in the medium he made magically subservient to his sovereign will. And it cannot be denied that, even in the hands of the Master, the oil, for air and purity of colour, fails to rival the water-colour.

No. 125. *The Falls of Clyde, Lanarkshire, Noon.* Painted 1802. 28½ × 41 inches. Lent by Robert D. Holt, Esq.

In its way as fine as the "Pembroke," displaying Turner's consummate knowledge and power of representing falling and running water. The arrangement of parts, lines, and masses in this drawing is in his own Turnerian manner.

No. 126. *Rivaulx Abbey.* Painted 1825-30. 11 × 15½ inches. Lent by Sir Donald Currie.

No. 130. *Scarborough.* Painted 1810. 11 × 15½ inches. Lent by Arthur Severn, Esq., R.I.

No. 132. *Bolton Abbey, Wharfedale.* Painted 1809. 11 × 15½ inches. Lent by George Salting, Esq.

No. 134. *Llanthony Abbey.* Painted 1825-30. 11½ × 16½ inches. Lent by John Edward Taylor, Esq.

In these four drawings we behold Turner at his very best, and therefore wondrous in every artistic sense and quality.

No. 138. *Chryses worshipping the Sun.* Painted 1811. 26 × 39½ inches. Lent by Mrs. Ashton.

A great picture, distinguished amongst its peers by the truthful study of a tumbling sea, as well as by the peculiarly delicate character, so perfectly expressed, of the receding tide.

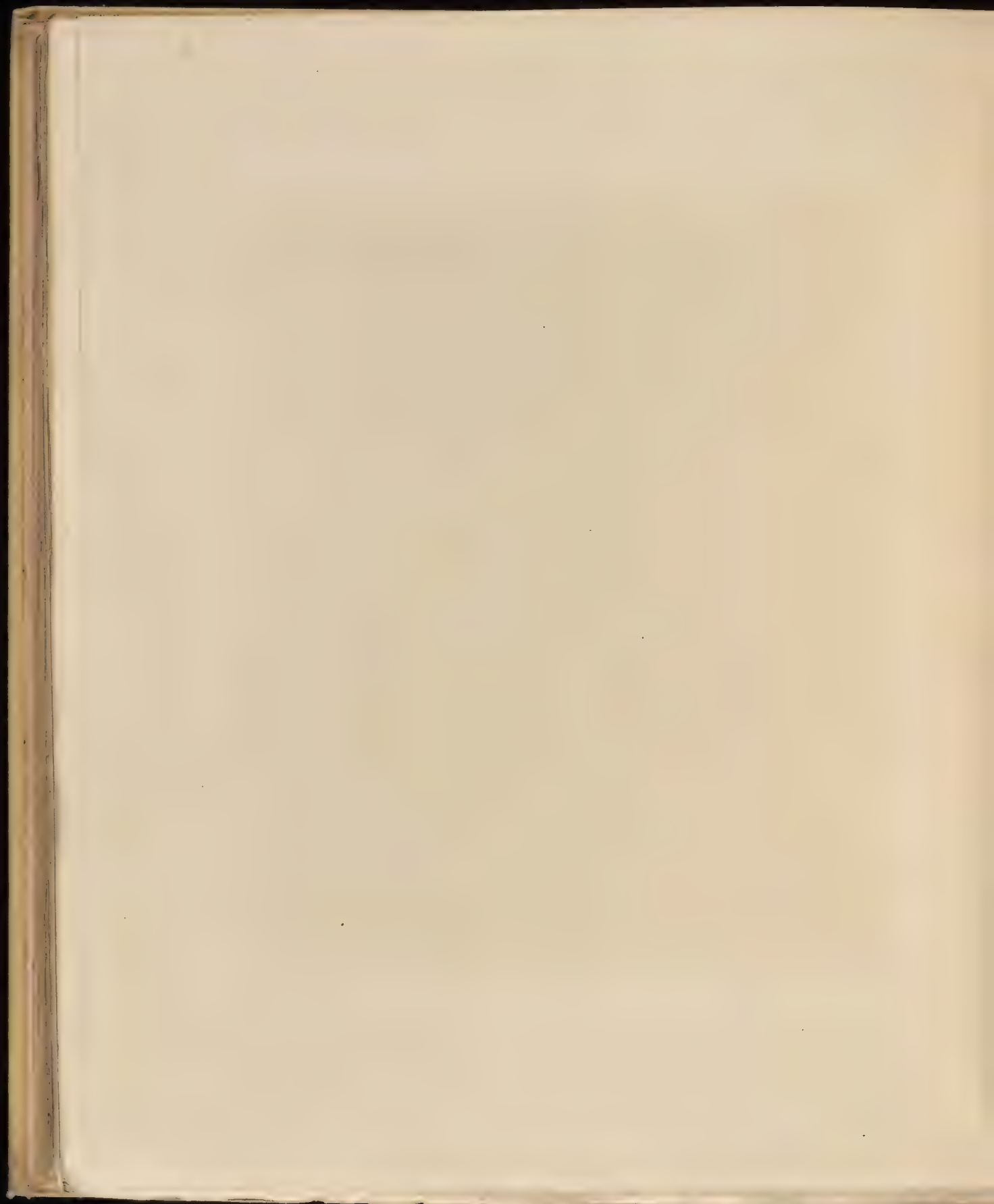
No. 140. *The Chain Bridge over the Tees.* Painted 1825-30. 10¾ × 16¾ inches. Lent by Abraham Haworth, Esq.

This is a fascinating, fairy-like work, and the running and falling water are, even for Turner, marvellous. Observe the quaint reminder that this is





*Boston, Utopia.*



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a grouse country, for there the birds are in a sheltered nook, safe enough from the shooters, who are far up on the hill.

No. 144. *The Longships Lighthouse, Land's End.* Painted 1825-30. 11 x 17 inches. Lent by John Edward Taylor, Esq.

Tremendous! Grand light and shade, with a wild sea. Mark the drawing, unapproachable by any other hand than his own, of the water running off the rocks.

No. 145. *Mount Vesuvius in Eruption.* Painted 1829. 11 x 15 inches. Lent by William Newall, Esq.

This marvellous piece of inspiration has all the grandeur of the "Ulysses." Nothing could be more vivid, more terrible, more dazzling in a depiction than the blood-light belching from the crater. Then we have

No. 146. *Malmesbury Abbey.* Painted 1826. 11 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 16 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Lent by R. E. Tatham, Esq.

No. 148. *Florence.* Painted about 1829. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by the Hon. W. F. D. Smith, M.P.

No. 149. *Italy.* Painted about 1835. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

No. 150. *Flüelen.* Painted 1838-40. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 18 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Lent by Ralph Brocklebank, Esq.

No. 155. *Oberwesel.* Painted 1840. 14 x 21 inches. Lent by E. Steinkopff, Esq.

No. 159. *The Splügen Pass.* Painted 1842. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 18 inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

No. 160. *Goldau.* Painted 1843. 12 x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by John Ruskin, Esq.

No. 161. *Lucerne.* Painted 1845. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Lent by Mrs. Newall. (Formerly in the collection of Mr. Ruskin.)

I group these splendid drawings, each of which has its history as a microcosm of the Master's exquisite art. They have supplied Mr. Ruskin

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with texts for his eloquently searching exposition of Turner's genius, as expressed in the water-colour which in the hands of the painter was a Prospero's wand.<sup>1</sup>

"What one feels—what I feel, at any rate—is that this collection ought to belong to the nation. Let us give the Old Masters with their golden-gloried saints a rest. Let us acquire possession of such examples as these of our own pure and inspiring art while that course is possible; albeit, with exportations of choice specimens proceeding daily, the prospect of worthy reservation diminishes in a deplorable degree, especially in water-colours. Mr. Temple, under the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, has opened out one beautiful vista in the garden of English Art. It is devoutly to be wished that he may live to open out many others, as well as the eyes of the people. The *Liber Studiorum*, which is perhaps the crown of Turner's genius, is richly represented in the Guildhall Exhibition. The impressions, with their velvety texture, are extremely fine. Indeed, some of them have such a depth of richness, that one feels, somewhat, the want of atmosphere. In others, of course, this constitutes their perfection. My own personal preference is for the less sepia-like deep impressions. However, nothing could be finer as a whole than what I may call the Guildhall *Liber Studiorum*, and the exhibition is in this respect a rare treat, especially to the student who would track Turner through his prodigious range of drawing

<sup>1</sup> "For general purposes, however, the career [of Turner] may be divided into three great styles. The first period is one of careful notation of natural fact, of sombre grandeur, of dignity and reserve. The second period shows the master interpreting, still with well-restrained emotion, the beauties of his native country, as well as of Switzerland and Italy, indulging on occasion in the highest finish, and greatly developing his power and variety as a colourist. The third and greatest period shows him in the lyrical interpretation of nature, in conception and realisation of dream visions as sad and awe-striking in their majesty as they are radiantly beautiful, rising to heights rarely attained by any other landscape painter. It is not safe to judge this period of Turner's career exclusively from the oil paintings, as even the greatest of these have been impaired by a process of disintegration resulting from the hazardous experiments of his technique. The finest of the water-colours alone give an adequate notion of what he attempted and achieved in the greatest phase of his wonderful career."—*Notes in the Catalogue of the Wallace Collection at Hertford House*.



## James Orrock

and composition. To Mr. Rawlinson, most earnest and intelligent of Turner's loving disciples, the public are indebted for a leisurely examination of a rare and choice collection of the *Liber* plates. To him, as well as to Mr. Temple, the thanks of the public for the privilege of studying the mighty master in quietude under one roof are due."

Splendid and abounding as the Turner Exhibition at the Guildhall was it lacked one famous picture. "Before I had the honour of possessing 'Rockets and Blue Lights,'" says Mr. Orrock, "I had long considered the picture Turner's masterpiece. It is essentially a Turner: a dream founded on a deep knowledge of nature; the concentration of the greatest art-intellect. It is as pure and as brilliant as his water-colours, and shows that he prepared a hard solid ground on his canvas to make the colours 'bear out' as if they were painted on white paper. This picture, like all Turner's at the same period, is more like water-colour than oil. The conception of the subject is Turner's alone, and the depiction of the tumble of the wild water, backed up by the weird masses of smoke from the struggling steamers which are running to port, is an emanation of genius. His deep study and knowledge of waves is shown in the fluted and corrugated character of the rough sea breaking upon a shallow shore. His repose and breadth of light and shade are expressed, by way of contrast, in the still water which repeats the storm-sky and the blue lights from the pier. The work is full of nature's infinity, in gradations of colour from corner to corner: broad, brilliant, and full of mystery."

In reference to Mr. Orrock's recently acquired masterpiece, Mr. W. Day, the maker of the fine art of chromolithography, wrote as follows:—

"44 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., June 7, 1900.

"DEAR MR. ORROCK,—I have just heard that you are the fortunate possessor of Turner's 'Blue Lights,' and think it may interest you to learn of my connection with the picture just fifty years ago.

## James Orrock

"Being at that time the leading, even the only publisher of costly works in colour, I was anxious to add to my reputation by producing and publishing a chromolithograph which to all time should remain the only perfect reproduction of a picture ever issued.

"Cost being no object to me in comparison to the reputation I was seeking, I devoted much time to find the worthiest picture for my purpose, and was fortunate enough to find and purchase the 'Blue Lights.' The next step was to find an artist able to interpret the subtlest beauties and intentions of Turner, and here again I was fortunate enough to be able to arrange with Robert Carrick, R.I., to devote himself without stint of time or money to produce the chromolithograph for me, with the result that, like the picture itself, it is a monument of English Art.

"I shall ever feel it a distinction to have been connected with the picture in the way I have described, and shall ever regret that I was not wealthy enough to retain it.—Yours sincerely,

"W. DAY."

"44 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., *June 27, 1900.*

"DEAR MR. ORROCK,—As you are now the possessor of Turner's masterpiece, 'Rockets and Blue Lights,' it may interest you that after I parted with that picture in 1852 I understand that it met with a very perilous adventure, one that might have led to its utter destruction, and its loss to posterity, and it occurred in this way.

"Its owner at the time of the promotion of the Manchester Exhibition of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom (1857), a Liverpool collector, consented to lend Turner's 'Blue Lights' with other celebrated pictures to the Exhibition, but would not trust them to travel by rail from Liverpool to Manchester, as he was afraid some injury might occur to them on the

## *James Orrock*

journey; therefore to ensure their absolute safety, as he fondly imagined, he had a van carefully fitted up to contain them so that he might convey them by turnpike road. Unfortunately, however, as the van was being driven over the intervening railway, at a level crossing, and was just upon the rails, a train rushed into it and scattered its contents! Fortunately, the 'Blue Lights' escaped with damage to its frame only.—Yours sincerely,

"W. DAY."

## CHAPTER VIII

Mr. Orrock on David Cox, "the sweetest singer of all landscape painters"—Master of all the impressionists—His clouds—His method—The air, the ozone in his landscapes—A prince of sketchers—His early training—The qualities of his works—"In the Hearts of the People"—The essayist's final testimony—A further consideration of the man—His career—Anecdote of John Varley—Painting figures on snuff-boxes—Assistant scene-painter under the elder Macready—"Little David" years after, and his old master—"I have a great deal to learn from *you* now"—The footsteps of Cox—At the Royal Oak, Bettws-y-Coed—The land of David Cox—"Wales is good enough for me!"—Home again—The end—"Good-bye, pictures."

"DAVID COX," writes Mr. Orrock in the *Art Journal*, in his essay on the second of the "Four Pillars of the English Water-Colour Art," "was the sweetest singer of all landscape painters; the Burns of our Art, who found his themes at his door, and sang them in his 'native woodnotes wild' with a sympathy that, perhaps, surpassed in its intensity the sympathy of every member of the glorious brotherhood. He seemed grateful for the power to appreciate Nature in her beauty and simplicity. He had no feeling of the idealisms and visions which so often go to the composition of feverish and restless members of the craft. To him the soft morning and evening light was like music which kept time and tune with his simple spirit. He loved Nature, as we love his pictures, for her sweetness rather than for her grandeur, although he not infrequently rose to the vivid representation of the mightiest effects of storm and tempest. His mode of expression was direct and simple, and, like Burns, he convinces us that what he says could only be said in the language which he employs—the most forcible shorthand interpretation of Nature which could be employed by a true impressionist. Cox was, in fact, the master of all the impressionists in landscape painting. He was brilliant, pure, rich, strong, and tender in his colouring, and never missed the 'accident' and 'travelling light' of Nature.





*The Fish Stall.*







*The 'Crackers'.*



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"In expressing, with unerring instinct, the storm-sky, the dripping rain-cloud, and the scudding cloud-shadows on woods and uplands, Cox has never had a rival. This power, like Turner's, was the result of most careful and severe training in what, again borrowing a phrase from another vocabulary, may be called the 'scale practice' in Art, which, like that of skilled musicians, was the basis of the wonderful technique of all our water-colour masters. It became a second nature to him, and enabled him to fluently carry out his theme. Muddiness and dirtiness were abhorrent to the painter, as 'The Vale of Clwyd' and 'Changing Pasture' amply prove.

"Cox's abiding desire was to strike off his drawing as direct as possible by 'the first intention,' and 'lift' the colours here and there for half grey-lights, finishing up with the knife for the high-lights. The first colour was put down at once with a full-flowing brush, and with a strength and brilliancy that remained to the end. Every tint that was added stood as *colour*, and neither deadened nor sullied those underneath. The shadow-parts of his work, like Morland's oil-painting, were religiously protected against additions to the first-intention painting, and the travelling lights were also as jealously left on the white paper, like snowflakes, to the end, and then delicately tinted and opalesced to suit the sky influence of the picture. Cox never floated-in the whole drawing, as was Turner's practice, while the entire paper was wet. On the contrary, he painted with a full and flooding brush on the dry paper, and left cumulus clouds and cirrus clouds sharp and clear, according to the design of the work, and dashed warm and cold tints into the flooded colour before it dried. He also 'lifted' half-lights before the colour dried, and he certainly excelled all the masters in producing the fascinating 'accidents' of the skies. In this particular gift Cox stands out alone. Those who have dwelt with and carefully studied his drawings can vouch for the truth of the statement.

"Turner, by wetting the whole of the paper, got more infinity

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of broken colour; but Cox, by his method, was brighter and fresher—his handling, in addition, giving the breezy feeling of the air. In Cox's landscapes, beyond all others, we feel the presence of ozone, and it is, as it were, the breath of our nostrils. Cox generally painted on paper with a coarser grain than that of the paper which Turner used, and, in later life especially, drew and loosely shaded in his studies with black chalk or charcoal. I myself possess several of this class, and most of them are done from nature, with marginal notes added here and there.

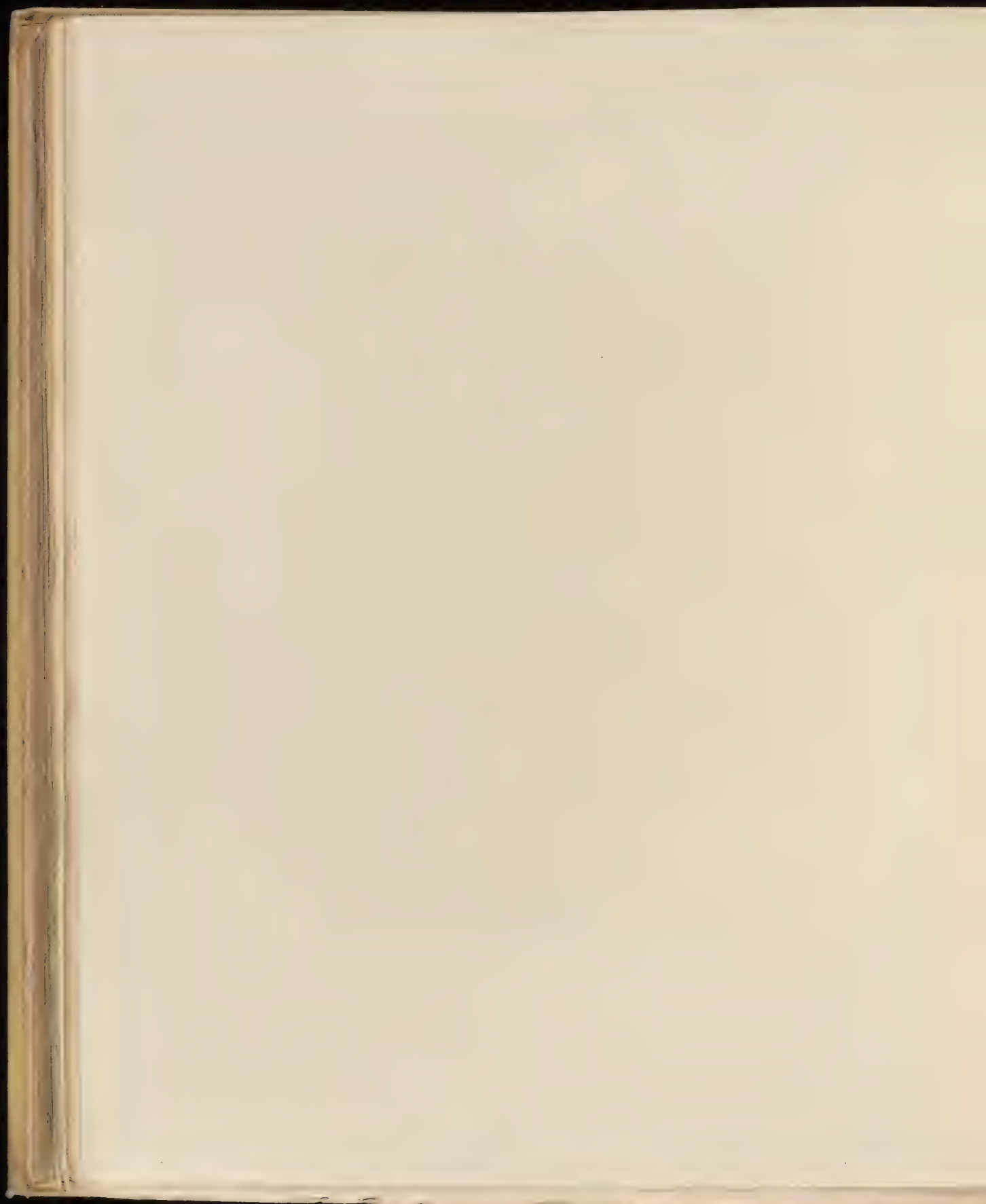
"This great painter was often stigmatised as 'one of the drawing masters,' and when he painted in oil, his work was laughed at, and pronounced 'thin and watery.' The laughter and scornful jibes, however, have long ceased. The ignorant and jealous have been silenced by the 'leaveners' who, as Mr. Ruskin says, have compelled the mocking multitude to accept, as a matter of faith, that which they could not understand. 'Thin and watery,' quotha! Who painted richer, or with a fuller and purer brush? He had his lesson in oil from Müller, who was one of the greatest of our masters. Was Müller's method thin and watery? And was not Müller also a master in water-colour?

"As I have said elsewhere, he was a prince of sketchers in this medium. Cox, Müller, Morland, and Bonington are the pride of our school as to the method of painting, for they were the purest, simplest, and most direct of all. To prophesy is hazardous, but the augurs who, years ago, foretold the rank of Cox and Holland (another of the despised and rejected) as oil-painters were in the right; the proof being that, to-day, the best collections would be deemed incomplete without examples in both mediums by those masters.

"The ordinary observer, or non-observer, declares, flippantly, that Cox could not draw; but the keen examiner who has insight of the right sort knows that he could draw, and that with a



*The Gleaners*  
(in oil)









Valley of the River, Japan

View of the River, Japan

View on a Common.

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master's hand, all things belonging to his field of art. Cox was bred a miniature-painter. He also painted scenes for Macready, the father of the famous tragedian. Consider the extent of the gamut which the two facts comprehend! The name of the miniaturist who instructed Cox was Fieldler, and he executed subjects for locket and snuff-box lids from the Dutch masters. Cox's master at Macready's theatre was a painter named de Maria, and Cox in after-life frequently spoke of him as a most accomplished scenic artist—in fact, a master in his line. In addition to his practice as a miniature and scene-painter—the opposite poles of practice—David Cox had lessons in water-colour painting from John Varley. Cox had, from his earliest knowledge of them, admired Varley's drawings, and this led to his choosing him for his teacher. Varley had scarcely a rival as a master of technique in water-colour painting.

“From this prodigious range of art practice Cox struck the balance, and became the greatest of all ‘shorthand’ painters of character. His aim, like that of the late Charles Keene, was to express as forcibly as possible what he had to say in the most concise language. Not being an academic figure-painter, sane men do not look for a display of the academic qualities in Cox any more than they do in Morland, but for all which bears upon and belongs to the true dignity of landscape painting, depend upon it, in Cox's work it will be found. No man ever painted figures and other incidents in landscape with finer fitness or truer character, and in depicting the leading features, such as trees, buildings, and skies, he was a veritable master. Serious and bright, instinct with character, yet gravely free from caricature, are the works of David Cox, while their colour is the colour of nature. The greys in the shade-part of his clouds possess a silvery truth which makes one feel the air in the sky; and no matter how strong and deep the dark thundery rain-clouds may be, it is possible to breathe.

“The artistic instruments Cox played upon were of themselves

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tuneful, and the music he produced from them was spontaneous and free from affectation. He took God's work as he found it, and gave us impressions which recall many a happy day of the land—our land!—the land which he loved, and whose varied freshness and beauty he depicted with such lasting fidelity. To quote the words of my late friend, William Hall, of Birmingham, the biographer of David Cox: 'He had a way of his own in looking at Nature, and in recording what he saw and felt, and lost no time in considering whether it would be better to endeavour to see with other eyes, and work according to other methods. There was a still small voice which said, "Rely on yourself! Have faith in your own nature, and in the faculties with which you are endowed." His aim in Art was to look at the subjects he proposed to delineate with a view solely to their interesting qualities, and to treat them in a simple, natural, unaffected manner. They never say, "Look at me, I am a miracle of Art, none but the highly cultivated can measure my excellence!" No, but they say, "I am that sweet green lane down which you loved to stroll when a child, to pluck the blue-bells on the hedge-banks, and the may-blossom from the overhanging boughs. I am that breezy common across which you often scoured with your playmates; when the windmill, like a thing of life, whirled its sails in the fresh gale, and the bonny lark, as Burns says, carolled above your head!"'

"And yet Cox's pictures are miracles of Art, and are for the highly cultivated taste. For that matter, they are for the *most* highly cultivated taste, since those who know and appreciate this art can know and appreciate any art, if the opportunity be given.

"High art or low, Cox, like Burns, lives in the hearts of the people, and, like Homer, his ballads are sung from door to door. Cox, as I have said, excels all the painters of landscape in giving us the 'accident' of Nature; in colouring, in composition, in the placing of his figures, and in the portrayal of incident of every kind. Of all the painters of landscape, Cox has had by far the largest following. His influence has been felt, perhaps, more



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powerfully than that of all the landscape painters put together. He is one of those rare spirits Hood perceived when in his sonnet on 'False Poets and True,' which he inscribed to Wordsworth he wrote—

'Yet few there be who pipe so sweet and loud,  
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:  
The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd  
Of undistinguish'd birds, a twittering race;  
But only lark and nightingale forlorn  
Fill up the silences of night and morn.'

The foregoing essay comprehends Mr. Orrock's appreciation of the master, who is, in his view, the second of the Four Pillars of English Water-Colour Art. Like Constable and Gainsborough, David Cox was in himself and in his work freshly and healthily national. He was "a man who," as his intimate friend and biographer, William Hall, says, "was enthusiastically devoted to his art, who lived in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, and was rarely drawn aside from his beloved pursuit." Men and women have been sometimes swiftly pictured in two or three words of an apt epithet, and the wit or humour of it has now and then pointed the felicity for remembrance. Occasionally a touch of fancy or poetry has been apparent in the phrase, making it more distinctly memorable. For instance, when an epitaph was wanted for Charles Knight, Douglas Jerrold suggested "Good Knight"—a benison and a biography. We think of the splendid career of John Phillip, one of the greatest of English painters, and we approve it, when we recollect that he was called "Phillip of Spain." The painter of "The Vale of Clwyd" and "The Welsh Funeral" never cultivated so much as a rood of land, and yet it seems natural to speak—as Turner, and after Turner his friends and admirers, spoke of him—as "Farmer Cox." It was a thoroughly English appellation, and those who used it felt that in that sense it expressed the man. Not that there was not agricultural blood in his veins, as there was in Constable's. His

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father was a forger of bayonets and gun-barrels, but his mother was the daughter of a farmer and miller of Birmingham, where he was born. Mr. Orrock has mentioned his curiously diverse training as a painter. Few men have boxed the compass as David Cox did. The boy broke his leg, and while keeping his bed until the fracture was united he amused himself by copying prints. One step even in that primitive and restricted practice rapidly led to another. It was evident to his relatives and friends that young David had a talent for drawing, and, presently provided by an appreciative uncle with a box of colours and some brushes, he painted away, and, to quote the words of one of his biographers, "in no long time achieved a number of small successes." He even sold his modest little drawings to admiring friends and neighbours. It was determined by his excellent parents that he should receive a few lessons in the art at a night-school kept by Mr. Joseph Barber, of Birmingham, who was accounted a competent drawing-master and artist. It is stated by Mr. Hall that, with the exception of two or three lessons in after years from John Varley, the instruction he received at the Birmingham night-school was all he had. It has been erroneously stated by a recent writer that John Varley was the Father of the English Water-Colour School. That distinction clearly belongs to Paul Sandby, the brother of Thomas Sandby, the architect and landscape gardener. Not that John Varley was not one of the first of the pioneers of the English Water-Colour Art. And he was a great teacher, recognised as such by all the leading artists of his time. J. T. Smith, in his "Nollekens and His Times," relates that "a lady, with her three daughters, once visited Mr. Nollekens to show him the drawings of the youngest, who was a natural genius. Upon his looking at them, he advised her to have a regular drawing-master; 'and I can recommend you one,' added he; 'he only lives over the way, and his name is John Varley.' The lady asked him if he were a man of mind. 'Oh yes,' said Nollekens,

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'he's a clever fellow, one of our best: I'll ring the bell, and send my maid for him: he'll soon tell you his mind.'" Varley, who was as warm-hearted and as generous as he was accomplished in his art, refused, after giving David Cox a few lessons at ten shillings a piece, and on ascertaining that he was pursuing drawing as a profession, to take another pupil's fee from him.

The figures which occur in Cox's landscapes, as Mr. Orrock has pointed out, without laying special stress on the contention—for that to an intelligent perception should be unnecessary—are the right figures, are rightly "felt" and placed, and, in relation to the scene, finished to the appropriate pitch. They are, in short, a landscape-painter's figures. He was apprenticed, as Mr. Orrock has mentioned, to a miniature-painter in Birmingham, a man named Fieldler, and by him was taught to execute subjects for locketts, and for the lids of snuff-boxes. "These designs were frequently taken from the pictures of Teniers, Ostade, and other painters of the Dutch School, and were views in Holland, with out-of-door merry-makings; cottage interiors, with boors drinking, smoking, and playing at cards; quarrelling peasants, armed with drawn knives and three-legged stools; heads of burgomasters, after Rembrandt; and subjects of a similar kind."<sup>1</sup> The suicide of his master made a tragic end of his indentures, and David had to seek other employment. This he found "at the Birmingham Theatre, which was then under the management of the elder Macready, as assistant to a M. de Maria, scene-painter to the company, a person of considerable ability in his line."<sup>2</sup>

Circumstances prevented him from devoting himself to the new pursuit. "His parents fearing that his moral character might suffer from his connection with the players," his mother procured his release from his engagement with the father of the

<sup>1</sup> "A Biography of David Cox," by William Hall.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

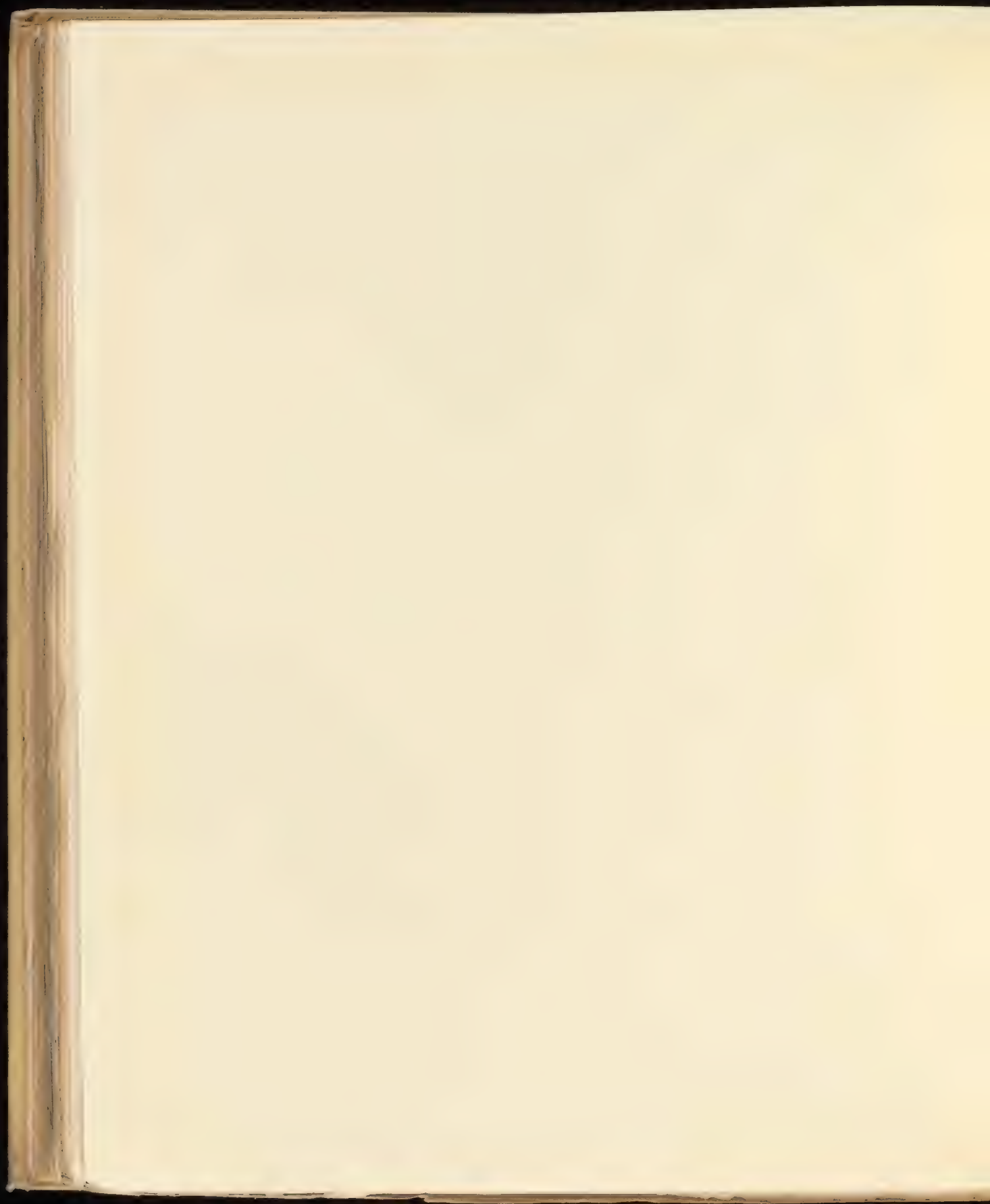
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famous tragedian. He may, however, be fairly placed in the brotherhood which includes Nasmyth, Roberts, Chambers, W. L. Leitch, Stanfield, De Louthembourg, and other landscape painters who were originally practitioners of the scenic art. It is worthy of note that during his scene-painting days he executed for employment in a play a stage-portrait that was not only entirely acceptable for the purpose, but a faithful likeness of the actress it represented. An anecdote belonging to this period of Cox's life may be related in the words of Mr. Hall: "Many years after Cox had left the theatre, when he had become a member of the Society of Painters in Water-colours, and an exhibitor in their rooms, he was one day strolling through the gallery, the Exhibition being then open, when he saw an elderly gentleman, catalogue in hand, looking admiringly at one of his drawings. Cox recognised in the visitor his old master at the Birmingham Theatre, de Maria, and addressed him by name, but was evidently forgotten. Cox inquired if he did not remember 'one David Cox, a very young artist, who resided in Birmingham many years ago?' 'What! little David, who used to wash brushes and grind colours for me at the theatre?' 'Yes; I am little David.' 'Did you make that drawing?' pointing to the one he had been admiring. 'I did,' said Cox; 'I learned a great deal from *you*, sir.' 'Then, I have a great deal to learn from *you*, now!' rejoined the old man; and both master and pupil were well satisfied." Cox painted the scenery for a toy theatre for young Macready when the latter was a boy at school. Years after, when that boy had become famous, he was written to with reference to a project for placing a portrait "painted by an eminent hand in some public institution in his native town." Macready, in replying, said, "I beg to express the great pleasure I have in remembering my early acquaintance with Mr. David Cox, and the gratification it has afforded me to observe his rise to such distinguished eminence in his art." He also sent a donation to the portrait fund. There is some doubt on the part of one of his biographers





DURHAM (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH) 1873.



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as to whether he entered into a regular engagement to paint the scenery at Astley's Theatre on his arriving in London, accompanied by his mother, and allured by an offer to join the staff of the renowned amphitheatre. Mr. Roget, however, prints a note from Mr. Jenkins's MSS. which points to the conclusion that Cox almost ended his career as a scenic artist at Astley's. "He is said to have painted a drum which, being in perspective, only showed *one* head. Astley insisted that a drum had *two* heads. He was not to be convinced, and had the drum painted with two heads by David Cox!" He executed a few commissions for scenery in a rough sort of painter's room which he had had fitted up in a builder's yard, for the Swansea and Wolverhampton Theatres, amongst others. His achievements as a provider of drawings for students to copy, as a Drawing Master, as the author of such works as "A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water-Colours," exhaustively chronicled by both his biographers, exhibit unremitting industry and the gradual growth of those powers which finally placed him imperishably amongst the purest, the sweetest, the manliest of the English Masters. He was absorbed in his Art. He lived in it and for it. He got nothing but the greatest good, as the story of his simple life testifies, out of it.

Here this brief recapitulation of the main features of the tranquil history of David Cox might terminate, if one did not feel reluctant to part with the artist without saying more about the man. His was a long and incessant struggle for a livelihood before he was enabled to emancipate himself from the mill-horse obligations of school teaching, and the trammels inseparable from drawing for the publishers. He wrote the scripture of his career with his pencil upon the banks of the Thames, the Lugg, and the Wye, on Surrey commons and in Derbyshire dales, and—where Turner had written some of his—at Bolton Abbey, finally and supremely completing its greatest chapter in "dear old Wales." We track his footsteps lovingly, and we take no more account

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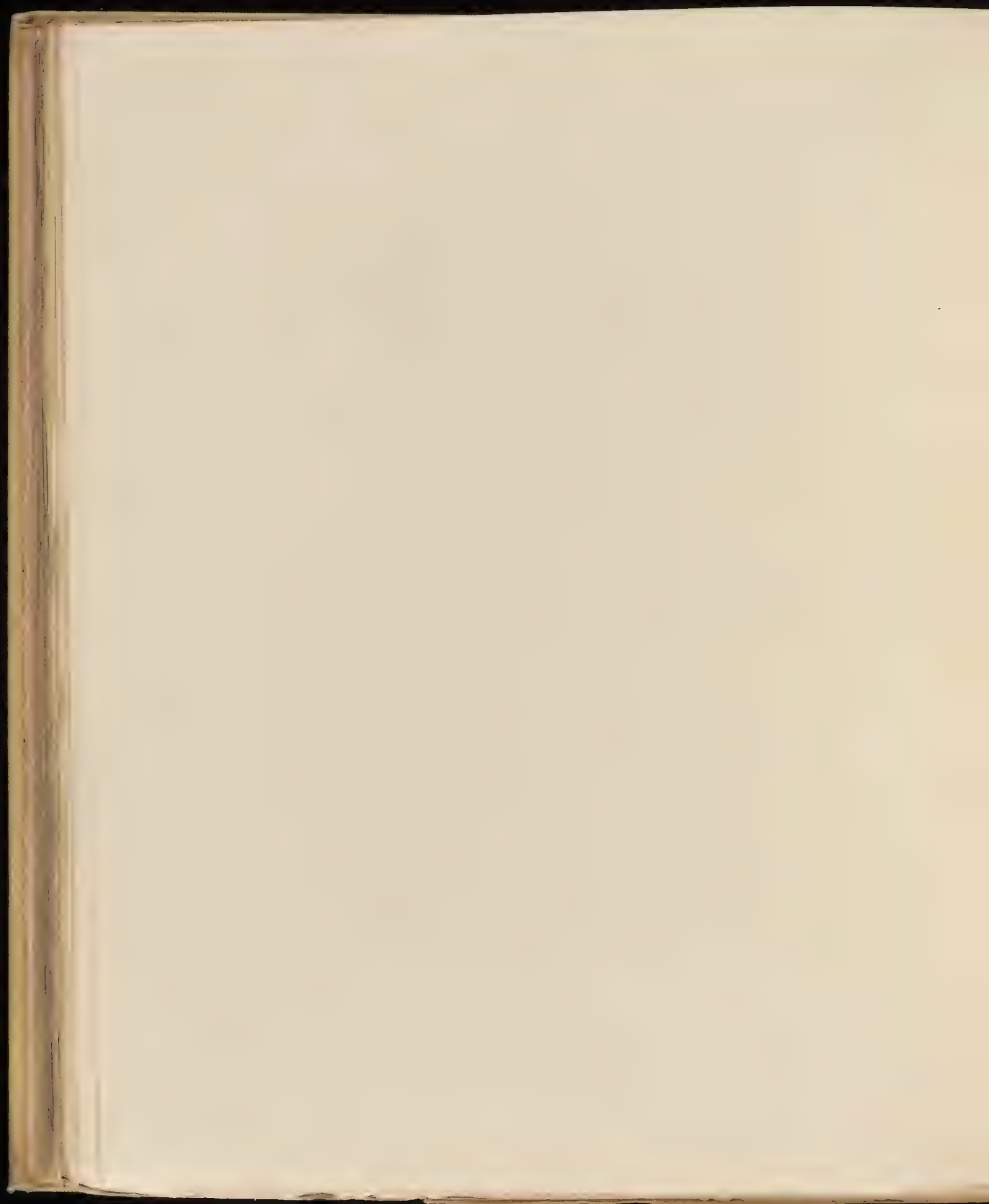
than he did of his holiday trips abroad. They were picturesquely chronicled, and the handwriting in France, in Belgium, in Holland was that of David Cox; but one's heart beats as his did most sympathetically with the English work of his fragrant dewy English pencil. "Bother to Switzerland!" he exclaimed on one occasion when the grandeur of her mountainous scenery was extolled, "Wales is quite good enough for me." He glorified with his pencil the scenery of Wales wherever he painted, as Sir Walter Scott has glorified the scenery of *his* Scotland with his pen. Artists and tourists through Wales linger in the land of David Cox, and tread where he trod while recalling the pleasant personal traditions which yet cling to his memory.

We like to think of him as a son of the same soil that produced Shakespeare, with an ancestry that had been planted in Shakespeare's country. His early life, which might have been supposed to be shaping him for a definite calling, made apparently for anything rather than that of a landscape painter loving to live like Constable and Corot face to face with Nature in her gentlest and most majestic aspects, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." He had painted stage scenery, he had even "gone on" as an actor—it is said in the harlequinade, and that he once played the part of clown—and had been, therefore, under the spell of the playhouse. For him, however, that had no glamour. He accomplished what he was called upon to perform in that sphere with good-natured thoroughness, and when he adopted the profession of drawing-master he did no less. Sir William Napier, who had been one of his pupils, has borne testimony to his efficiency as a teacher. He put as much art and honest labour into his "drawing copies," and into the illustrations which he made for county histories and similar works, as he did into his most ambitious pictures. He was simply unable to scamp anything he set his hand to. When he was sold up, through no fault of his own, he faced the world again with cheerful fortitude, and made no noise.





*Shanghai Pastures*  
(in color)



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He was such a sweetly simple soul, and harmonised so perfectly with the choice friends who with his kindred formed his happy home circle, that finding him separate and assertive of himself for the purposes of portraiture is a task beset with charming difficulties. His intimate friend and biographer, William Hall, has evidently felt it impossible to place his hero in a striking pose. But every glimpse we get of David Cox is a delightful revelation. We are convinced from the scant record of the good things he said that he was a humorist. He keenly enjoyed the fun of the situation when he was caught in the act of painting the sign-board of the Royal Oak by one of his young lady pupils from London, and vainly endeavoured by averting his face to persuade her that he was the local sign-painter. He could give a sharp answer, witty as well as humorous, but not a splenetic one. Of the latter he was incapable. He loved a merry jest, and, without being at all addicted to practical joking, he has been known to promote one or two innocent pleasantries of that description at the expense of a brother brush. One of these is recorded. His indignantly righteous frustration of another, which was not at all innocent, disclosed a trait in his character which cannot be omitted from the features essential to complete portraiture. "Once, when he was staying at Bettws," says Mr. Hall, "there were several gay, rattling, care-for-nothing young artists in the place, who amused themselves by drawing on the white-washed walls of the church porch and lych gateway caricatures of the parson and clerk. The parson was represented in the pulpit, preaching, and banging the cushion with his fist, while the congregation near his desk were fast asleep. Cox, when he came out from service, noticed these caricatures, and was greatly disgusted. 'My goodness!' he said to a friend, 'what will these poor people think of us?' As soon as night came on, he said to one or two friends at the 'Oak,' 'Who will go with me to the churchyard, and carry some water and a brush?' A volunteer was soon forthcoming, and the pair sallied forth, Cox carrying a stable

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lanthorn, and his companion a pail of water. Within an hour they returned, Cox evidently well pleased at what he had done. 'There is not a vestige of the vile things left,' said he. 'If anybody should ask who rubbed them out, tell him I did!'

We picture him, welcomed by old and young, with his thoughtful little "remembrances" for both, on his annually recurring visit to Bettws. We behold him, lending a hand to a youthful sketcher blunderingly at fault: "Lend me your palette and brushes, and I will do a bit for you." We hear him, while he is at work, telling the youngster how to proceed: "Don't spare the paint! Use plenty of colour, and *dab at it!*" We are with him at night in the cosy artists' room at the Royal Oak, and we join him at his simple supper of oatmeal and milk. ("Who's for crowdie?") We admire, we respect, we love this great artist and sound-hearted, whole-souled Englishman in every phase of his character. He longed to spend the evening of his days at the old Midland home, and when that wish was fulfilled his happiness in his work was complete. The friends he gathered round him there might almost have been likened (without the usquebagh) to the Burns circle, "when Rab and Allan cam' to pree." They were equal in taste, in sympathy, in joy in their work, but not in achievement. Yet, so far as David Cox was concerned, monarch though he was, it was a little republic. A generous man in his gifts of sketches and drawings to his friends, he was also possessed, as it were, with a fear of setting too high a price on his work. Read in the light of the later monetary appreciation of David Cox's pictures and drawings, the sums he himself received for them appear ridiculous. Another characteristic of his was a sensitiveness to the criticism of members of his own Society. He never ceased to feel in his inmost soul that he was called to do the work he did in the way he did it, but it fretted him to think that he was misunderstood. "The sparkle and shimmer of foliage and weedage, in the fitful breeze that rolls away the clouds from the watery sun, when the shower and the sunshine chase each other over the land, have never been given



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with greater truth than by David Cox."<sup>1</sup> "For unmistakable love of and sympathy with his subject, for delight in his work, and the power of giving delight, there is no artist, not even Turner, to whom I should, without great unwillingness, cede pre-eminence over David Cox."<sup>2</sup>

Such opinions as these, which are quoted as types, were overborne in his mind by the criticisms of certain of the London brotherhood. Writing in 1853 he says, "I wish now I had taken Mr. Roberts's advice and sent my drawings in without a price, as it strikes me the committee think them too rough; they forget they are *the work of the mind*, which I consider very far before portraits of places." Posthumous tributes to his separately lofty achievement are to be found in the essays of such distinguished writers on British Art as Mr. Humphry Ward, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, and Mr. Wedmore. In the last-named authority's delicate and searching work on David Cox, we have a treatise that may be read with Mr. Orrock's own glowing appreciation. Cox died in 1859. Before taking to his bed, and on retiring one evening earlier than usual, quite worn out with pain and weariness, he seems to have had a presentiment that his end was at hand, for on looking round his old sitting-room, as he went out at the door, he said mournfully, "Good-bye, pictures!" He never saw them again.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Redgrave.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> Eminent authority in Art as Richard Muther, Professor of Art History at the University of Breslau, and late Keeper of the Prints at the Munich Pinakothek, is, he is a German with a passion for classification and sectionising and grouping that is necessarily at fault when he deals with English painters. It is hard to say whether his stupendous work (*"The History of Modern Painting;"* London, Henry & Co., 1896) is more amazing for some of the painters he has comprehended in his list of English masters, than it is for those he has omitted. In both respects one is almost impelled to conclude that, either his judgment has been warped, or that he has been prevented by the very magnitude of his task from giving the subject the exhaustive examination which it demands. Professor Muther's testimony to David Cox is, however, eloquent and true, and, coming from a German critic, is of peculiar interest. He says, "Cox is a great and bold master. The townsman when he first comes into the country, after being imprisoned for months together in a wilderness of bricks and mortar, does not begin at once to count the trees, leaves, and stones lying on the ground. He draws a long breath and exclaims, 'What balm!' Cox, too, has not painted details in the manner of the Pre-Raphaelites. He represented the soft wind sweeping over the English meadows,

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the fresh purity of the air, the storms that agitate the landscape of Wales. A delicate silver-grey is spread over most of his pictures, and his method of expression is powerful and nervous. By preference he has celebrated, both in oil-paintings and in boldly handled water-colours, the boundless deeps of the sky in its thousand variations of light, now deep blue at broad noon, and now eerily gloomy and disturbed. The fame of being the greatest of English water-colour painters is his beyond dispute, yet if he had painted in oils from his youth he would probably have become the most important English landscapist. His small pictures are pure and delicate in colour, and fresh and breezy in atmospheric effect. It is only in large pictures that power is at times denied him." This is Professor Muther's opinion. While respecting it as such, lonely as it is, one wonders whether he ever saw "The Vale of Clwyd."

## CHAPTER IX

Mr. Orrock's appreciation of Peter De Wint—Dutch and Scotch—De Wint's oil pictures—Neglect of De Wint at the National Gallery—De Wint's method, colour, and vision—His palette and pigments—Mr. Orrock's closing remarks—The early career of the painter—John Raphael Smith, Hilton, and De Wint—De Wint's marriage—Lincoln subjects—"The Cricketers"—Characteristic shrewdness—Anecdotes—Dealers—De Wint and his one favoured dealer—Estimate of the painter's character.

"THE Dutch and Scottish 'blend,'" writes Mr. Orrock in his *Art Journal* essay on "The Third Pillar of the English Water-Colour Art," "has produced in Peter De Wint the great colourist of our landscape school, which means the greatest landscape colourist of any school. On his father's side he was Dutch; on his mother's, Scottish; and in art those nations have always had a strong sympathy with each other, and a singularly healthy spirit. Raeburn, Wilkie, and Thomson of Duddingston would not have disgraced the school of Rembrandt, Hals, and Cuyp, for indeed they belonged to that brotherhood of colourists, and sang together in tune and harmony. The Dutch and Scots have ever been healthy painters, with an instinctive abhorrence of morbidity and eccentricity. There are many scientists who maintain that genius comes from the mother. Assuming their theory to be sound, Scotland may fairly claim De Wint as one of her gifted children. It cannot be denied that the small tract of country south of the Firths of Forth and Clyde, with the strip of east coast as far north as Aberdeen, has produced more colourists than any district of similar extent within the British Isles. The proportion of Scottish members in the Royal Academy, at all periods, affords curious proof of this assertion.

"De Wint was celebrated as a water-colour painter, and his

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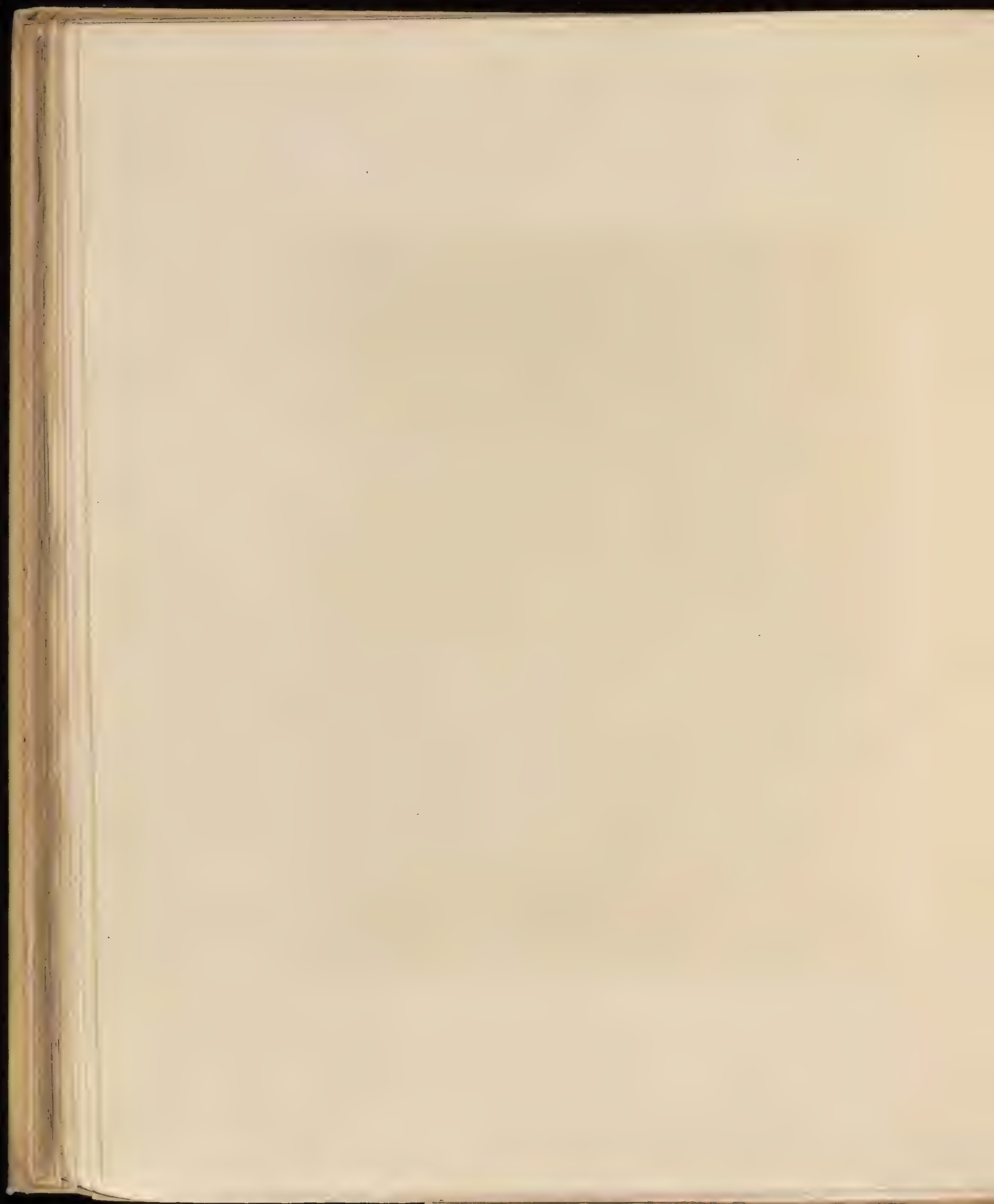
originality in this medium is as marked as that of any of the English masters. He was also a chief in oil-painting—is one of the distinguished group of water-colour painters whose *oil* pictures are now acknowledged to be in the first class. Of course, he had to suffer the fate of all men who are known and accepted for one class of subject produced in a certain medium, and De Wint's medium being water-colour, like that of Cox and Holland and several others, his oil pictures were belittled, if not condemned. The ignorant public, backed by the jealousy and prejudice—jealousy taking the lead—of certain members of the oil-painting fraternity, caused De Wint's suppression as a painter in a medium which not a few of his alarmed rivals all but denied him the right to employ. The two celebrated oil pictures that are now at the South Kensington Museum are object-lessons to those interested in this not uncommon phase in the life of an artist struggling for a position. He had to die to achieve it, but he is *there*, with the other immortals. It is stated by Mr. Walter Armstrong, in his *Life of De Wint*, that those pictures were stowed away for years in a loft. Mrs. Tatlock, the painter's daughter, offered them at last to the National Gallery, but Sir William Boxall refused the gift on the ground of want of room! Nay, he would not even condescend to look at them. Space in plenty was always ready, however, for immensely costly works by foreign artists. If those De Wints were offered to-day, not as a gift, but at a high price, it is more than probable that, like the Stark and others, a place in Trafalgar Square would be theirs. They were, as a matter of fact, offered, after Sir William Boxall's declining to have anything to do with them, to South Kensington Museum, where space was not only found, but places of honour allotted. The discerning public can now judge what manner of oil-work De Wint, 'the drawing master,' could produce. What are we to say of irresponsible 'authorities' who servilely wait on fashion, while genius is shown the door? Those two Kensington De Wints would have conferred high honour on





At home, autumn, 1884

Summer Evening.



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our National Gallery; deprived of their association, to quote Mr. Walter Armstrong's words, Constable's 'Cornfield,' and 'Hay-wain,' and 'Valley Farm,' are left without two of the best companions they could find in Europe.

"Some stress has been put on the fact that Constable, having a strong sympathy for De Wint's art, bought one of his pictures, this being—as it is alleged—the only instance of a painter of eminence doing De Wint such an honour. The statement is misleading. Numbers of artists of undoubted distinction had, and still possess, De Wint's pictures and drawings. The fact is, Constable *felt* De Wint's art as he felt Richard Wilson's, for it was the work of a painter whose instinct led him to make suggestive pictures of nature. In the best—that is to say, in the truest—sense of the term, De Wint's was impressionist work. He loved to paint landscape in its grand and solemn moods, and to aid him in the exposition of this feeling for grandeur and solemnity he nearly always executed his drawings on Creswick paper—a material that was made by that famous paper-maker, in graduated shades of ivory tint. The ground was thus prepared for his blooming and luscious colouring, for his feeling, like a rare musician's, was for the interpretation of the ripe and mellow Cremona, and not for that of the screaming modern instrument.

"His love of deep colour, and 'first intention' work, often led him, as it were, to swallow up his *drawing*, and this practice afforded the ignorant, as in the case of Constable, a chance to decry his 'shameful point drawing.' But let those who are so ignorantly censorious be more cautious than the R.A. who denounced Constable for the same defect. It were well if the latter censor were to advance his knowledge of the subject by examining the drawings of Constable at South Kensington, and the De Wints at Birmingham. This, however, is by the way. De Wint painted numerous studies of still-life of every kind which were frequently before his pupils. Like all great colourists, such as Etty, William

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Hunt, Müller, and Holland, he loved flowers and frequently painted them.

"He flooded his paper, and drove the running colour in masses deep into it; the lay-in was therefore rich and full in the extreme, and looked like mosaics, or the marbling of jasper. With his divinely discerning eye he looked for, and found, those massed mosaics of nature where an ordinary vision would have been hunting up details. De Wint was not blind to the details, but he was gifted with the capacity to see more. Those details being to him lesser truths, he sacrificed or ignored them for the greater truths of colour, and tone, and chiaroscuro. No painter disturbed less his first lay-in than De Wint, for strength, luminosity, and wealth of colour in tone and harmony were his life. Body-colour he disliked; and, indeed, never used it save in points of high light or the 'incidents' in his pictures. It is invariably absent from the general work, including, of course, the sky. He loved to strike hard with vermilion and rich ochres, in parts of his full-coloured foregrounds; but such opaque colours were used as a foil of *colour*, not Chinese *white*, and they lighted up, as it were, the blooms of transparent tones, which so abundantly filled the other parts of his drawings. Now and again he would wake-up his picture by cutting out masses with a knife, toning these down afterwards to suit the effect.

"De Wint was not a diligent student of cloud-forms. He seemed invariably to divide his landscape into solid earth and impalpable air. The great 'values' we hear so much of nowadays were constantly practised and expressed by De Wint; grand cumulus clouds, with a scudding sky after rain, he seldom painted; and the loveliest of all skies, the grey-fringed clouds, over-laying darker masses of grey, as well as the ray-like cirrus, and half-lighted clouds floating in an expanse of blue, he seldom attempted. The rain-cloud, too, he rarely painted; in short, as a painter of skies, he was in no way to be compared with Turner, Cox, or Fielding. Cox and Collier were, *par excellence*, the painters of

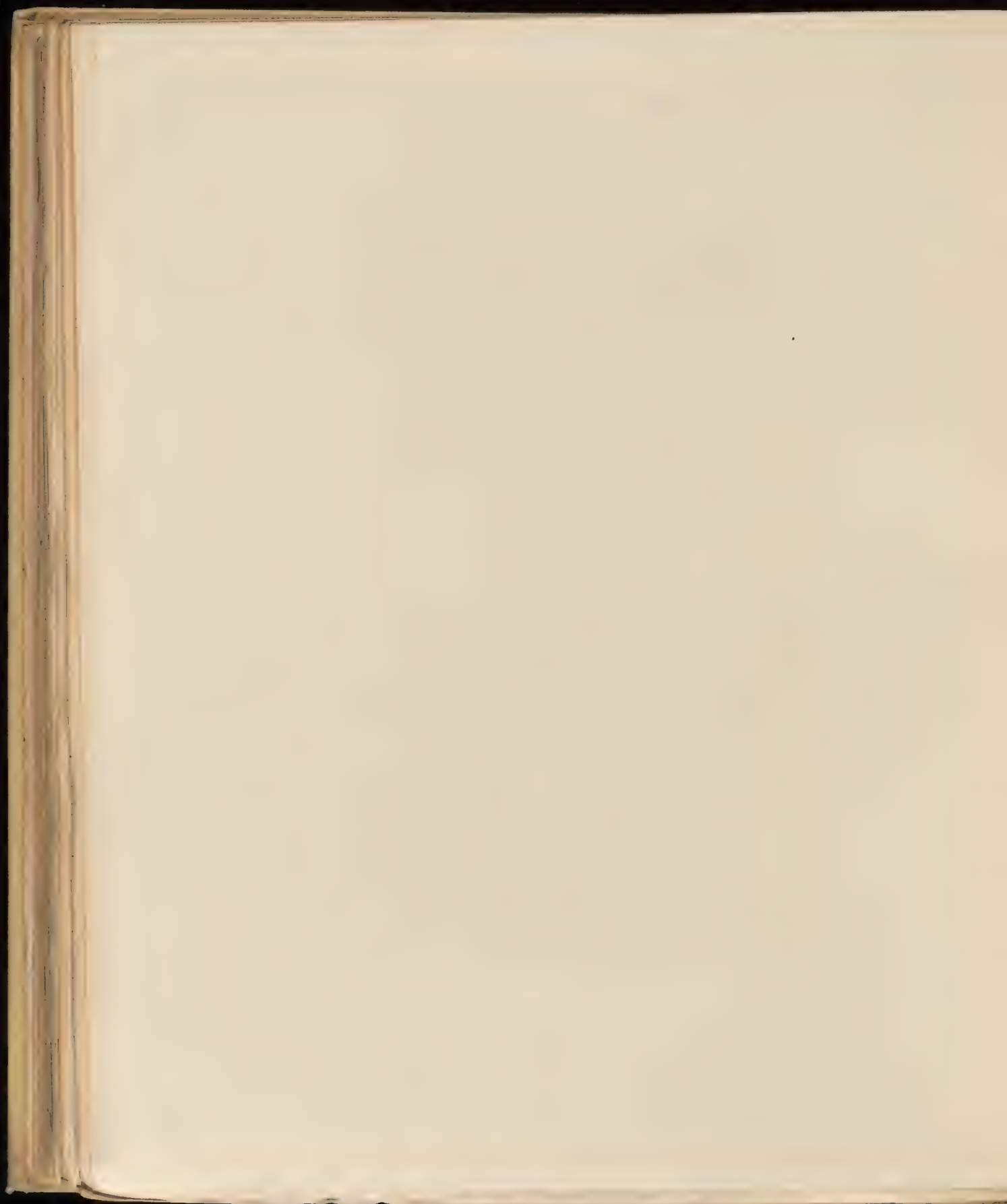




*The Cornfield.*  
(in Oct.)

1840. Oct. 1. 1840.

1840. Oct. 1. 1840.



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cloud-land; and when Collier especially was accused of ceaselessly painting moorland and common, he was in reality arranging for a grand and brilliant display of studies of clouds. As a painter of windy skies with silver masses of vapour after rain, as well as an absolutely truthful, yet poetical, delineator of the character of moorland landscape, Collier has had no rival—certainly, no superior. His death, which occurred at a comparatively recent date, has made a gap in the ranks of water-colour painters which no one can fill.

“De Wint, of all landscape masters, was, in spite of his breadth, one of the best draughtsmen of ‘incident’ that ever lived. He studied deeply the character of every pictorial foreground weed, and no man could draw cattle, boats, and foreground weeds better. Those who have lived with De Wint’s pictures, and have compared them with the works of other masters, know the truth of this statement. De Wint’s artistic character may be summed up as follows: He was the greatest colourist of any school of landscape art. He was an ‘ideal impressionist,’ and understood ‘values’ of all kinds, natural and artistic. He knew the details of nature thoroughly, but he looked at general effect, as one might at a grand building, preferring this to the niggles of minute work alone. He felt that nature was strong and rich and always in tone, and in distance and sky tender and delicate. As a composer, like Cox, Müller, and Constable, he selected his subject from nature, and always from the best point, altering it as little as was consistent with harmony of lines and arrangements of masses.

“As one of the Four Pillars of our great water-colour landscape art he, in quality, stands out. De Wint is De Wint, although no man knew the traditions of picture-making, as practised by the great masters, better than he. As a master, of course, he was unappreciated except by a modicum of judges, who have influenced the multitudes, and made him fashionable: nothing more. One can remember the time when his works were stigmatised as ‘daubs of dirty colour.’ Lastly, De Wint, like many colourists, often missed

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the gradation from foreground to extreme distance, for he loved virgin colour and hated 'washing.' In gradation he was excelled by Fielding and Barret, and, of course, by Turner.

"The French, as a rule, seem to have no appreciation of this 'value' of gradation into space, and therefore, at present, Constable, De Wint, and Crome are preferred to Turner and some other of our great masters. The French, however, have been just and generous to us in our art, for they have given it a higher place than has been assigned to it by our own people. They will ultimately provide for it a worthy pedestal.

"The information I have offered was, in a large measure, given to me by the late Mr. Coltman, of Leicester, one of De Wint's pupils, and supplemented by my friend and master, the late Mr. W. L. Leitch, who knew De Wint, and who, after his death, received a number of his pupils. I take this opportunity of giving De Wint's colours, which were furnished to me by Mr. Mills, the senior partner of Newman & Co., the well-known artists' colourmen of Soho Square. De Wint's box was designed by himself, and had bright metal instead of white enamelled leaves upon which he mixed his colours. De Wint used hard cakes, which he kept soft with water when in use. The chief colours were as follows:—Vermilion, Indian red, Prussian or cyanide blue—called De Wint's blue—brown madder, pink madder, sepia, gamboge, yellow ochre, burnt sienna, purple lake, brown pink, and indigo. Some were added in half-cakes, viz. orange ochre, vandyke brown, olive green cobalt, and emerald green. The selection of the most simple colours for the tone of his pictures showed his strength and manly artistic nature.

"It is to be hoped that before long the beautiful Henderson collection of De Wints, in the 'cellars' of the National Gallery, will be seen to better advantage, especially as the authorities are of opinion that their present habitation is an unsafe place to exhibit them and the Turners on bank holidays. Numbers of visitors to the National Gallery have been disappointed on the holidays in



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question, especially those whose opportunities are few, who selected the days so set apart to study the two masters' works. The iron gates which grimly guard those lower regions were, however, locked, and when the disappointed student inquired the reason, an official answered that it was considered that the exhibition of the water-colour Turners and De Wints on such public holidays was unsafe! Why should the public, many of whom come from the country, and whose only chance of seeing the drawings is on a bank holiday, be denied the opportunity of studying those masterpieces, in common with visitors who inhabit the higher latitudes? The best art-judges in the country would gladly pay homage to the drawings, even in the 'cellars.'

"[Since the foregoing was written the De Wints in question have been removed to South Kensington Museum, where they can be seen in all their freshness and beauty of colour. What a mistake it was that the Henderson Coxes, which have been so seriously rubbed and scratched, were not located also at South Kensington, instead of being permanently injured at the British Museum.]"

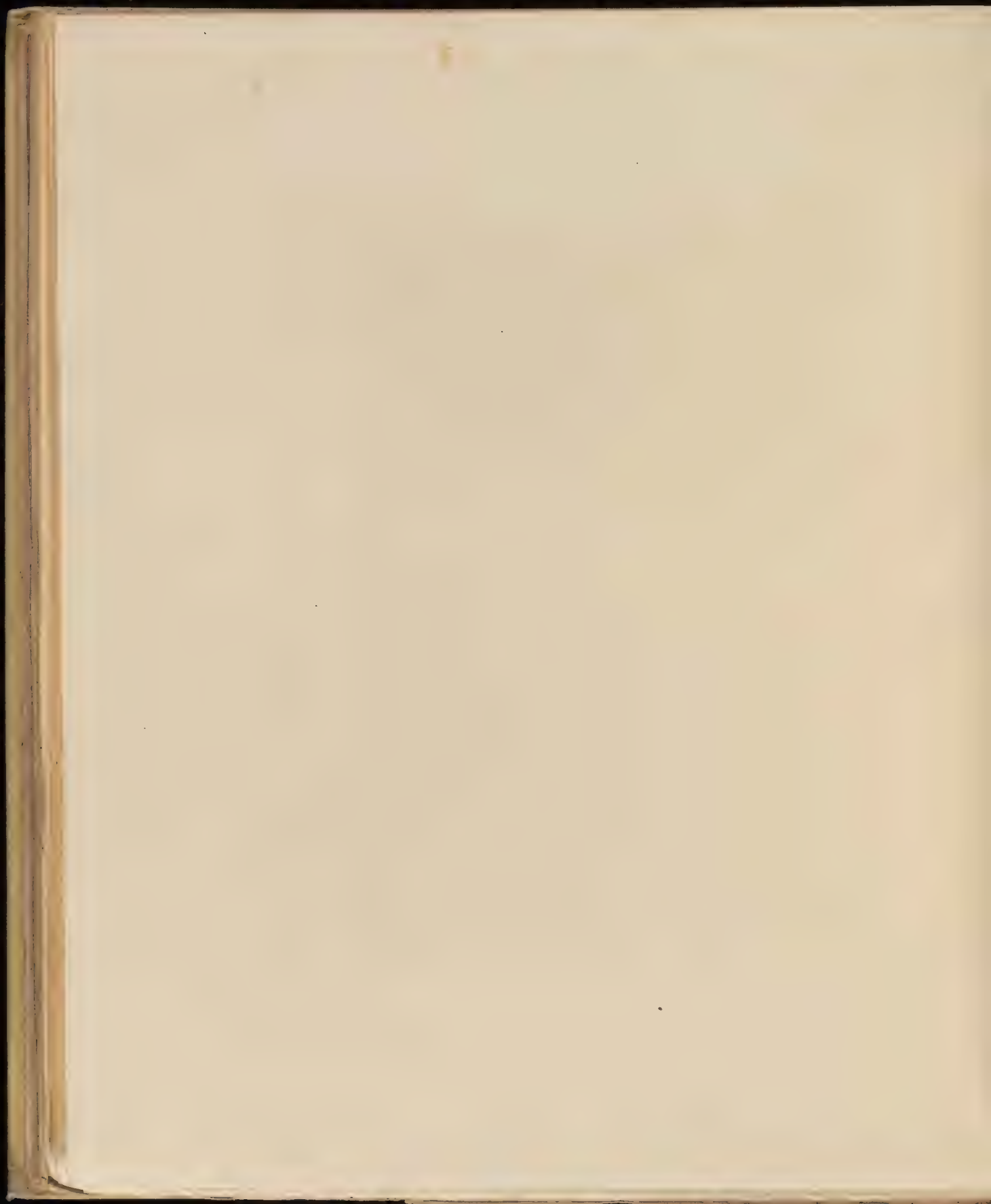
De Wint was born at Stone in Staffordshire, where his father, a physician with a Leyden degree, was in practice. Dr. De Wint had been "cut off with a shilling" by the rich Amsterdam merchant, his father, for marrying a Scottish lassie without a tocher, instead of the Dutch doctress, his cousin (who was at the time in practice in America), paternally chosen for his spouse. Peter's talent for drawing and enjoyment of the exercise led to his being sent to the best teacher of the art in the neighbourhood, one Rogers, who lived at Stafford. There was, however, no thought of making him a professional artist. He was destined to follow his father's profession. It is not improbable that the harsh and unjust treatment which Dr. De Wint had sustained at the hands of his own relentless parent, engendered a feeling of compliant sympathy with his boy, when the latter expressed a distaste for doctoring and begged to be allowed to follow the career upon which he had set his mind. The circumstance of

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Peter De Wint's apprenticeship with John Raphael Smith has been referred to in the first chapter of the present work. At Smith's De Wint formed a friendship with William Hilton, another apprentice, which was subsequently cemented and made kinship by his marriage with Hilton's sister. Hilton's father was a portrait painter, resident at Lincoln; and when the two devoted friends were freed of their indentures, visits to each other's homes were exchanged. The future R.A. obtained his emancipation in the ordinary manner, but De Wint purchased his liberty, before the period of his servitude legally expired, by undertaking to paint for his keenly shrewd and far-seeing master eighteen oil pictures within the space of two years. It was not surprising that De Wint should desire to dissolve his apprenticeship, at almost any cost. Some time before, Hilton had "run away"; and De Wint, on refusing to disclose the fugitive's hiding-place, was himself clapped into prison as a refractory apprentice. In appraising the commercial keenness—one need not use a harsher term—of such men as Turner and De Wint, sufficient heed is seldom given to, or excuse made for, the powerful predisposing cause. If De Wint's beginnings were not as hard as Turner's, their tendency was to harden and sharpen him for the struggle for life. And yet, is it not recorded that during his service with John Raphael Smith he gave lessons in drawing to his co-worker without fee or reward? Was not Smith, with all his bonhomie (he and reckless George Morland were boon companions), something of a sweater? His taking the youths with him on fishing excursions, and sending them forth to sketch while he pursued his sport, was a practice which, however congenial to them, was not at all to the artful angler's disadvantage. De Wint followed Turner and Girtin, and preceded Linnell and Hunt, at Dr. Munro's in Adelphi Terrace, where, it is said, he became enamoured of Girtin's style and influenced by it in his early drawings. That Dr. Munro was kind to the young artists whom he gathered around him, and was liked by them (Turner, possibly,



*Louther Castle*





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excepted), is unquestionable. At the same time, his bargain with the young sketchers and copiers did as much credit to his head as it did to his heart. Young men like Turner, and De Wint, and Linnell would observe this. The influence of the two "schools" of John Raphael Smith and Dr. Munro on De Wint doubtless made for teaching him to take extreme care of himself in the future.

It was a Jonathan and David friendship that of De Wint and Hilton, and yet the art of each was as wide from that of the other as Constable's and Leslie's art was diverse. Not that the two aspirants did not work side by side. They were both students at the Royal Academy, and we find that De Wint qualified for admission into the Life School in the year succeeding that of his marriage to Hilton's sister. To discriminative appreciators of the painter's work the terms "a De Wint subject" and "De Wint's country" have distinct meanings, albeit he was an artist with an extensive range, and with one that did not find its limit except perhaps in the portrayal of the sea. If, however, it did not come to us in the form of a charming tradition, we might feel that he experienced the very greatest enjoyment in painting Lincoln and the Lincoln country. Therein reposed the romance of his love and life. Many a poem is expressed in a picture the kernel sweetness of which is only known to the painter and another.

One of the best known and most characteristic of De Wint's paintings in water-colour is "Cricketers," in the South Kensington Museum. Redgrave, with a want of perception that is amazing in one who was a painter as well as a critic, says that De Wint "was a very indifferent draughtsman, and had little executive handling." Such a declaration rather places the witness out of court respecting his views of other characteristics and qualities of the painter in question. At all events, one takes exception to the statement that "the figures which De Wint introduces into his landscapes, though well placed and effective as to light and shade,

## James Orrock

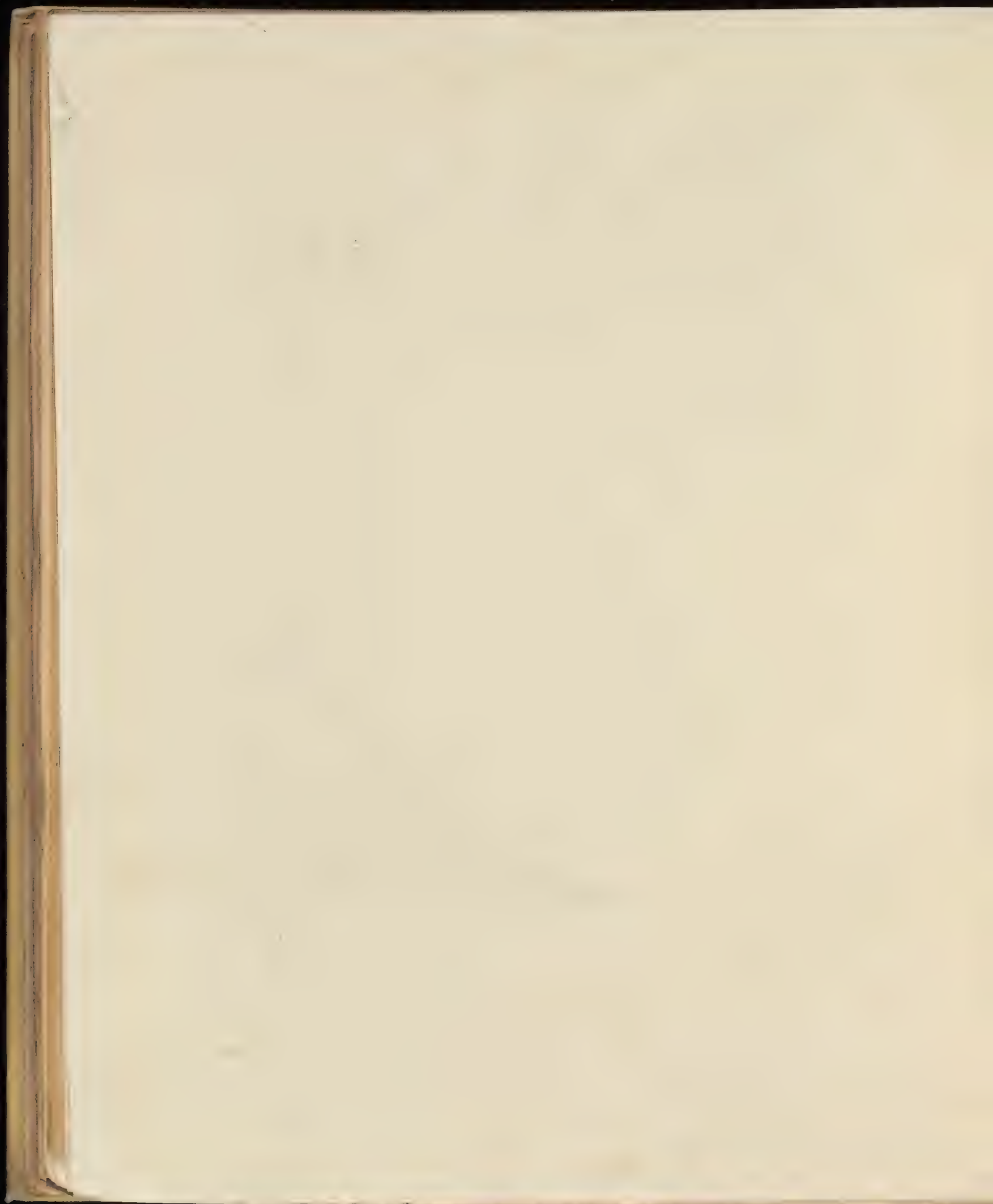
and as entrancing as points of colour leading the eye into the picture, are clumsy and feeble in their forms." "So certain a figure-draughtsman was De Wint" (writes Mr. Orrock in reference to Redgrave's criticism), "and his figures so sure, that he painted with a fluid-brush all round the figure, and left it, distinct in character, on the white paper. He then drew in the garments and so forth, and put down his deepest darks with rich local colour here and there, leaving his high lights—a white jacket for example—untouched. The result was that the figure stood out in light and dark, while harmonising perfectly with the scene. And, remember, De Wint was a first-class point draughtsman. I have in my possession examples of De Wint which show that in drawing and placing the figure, and in cattle-drawing (in which he was in his school unsurpassed), he was amongst landscapists a master. Every figure that De Wint drew is a refutation of Redgrave's declaration." It has never been doubted that the figures in the picture referred to are cricketers. They are rustics, and they are playing the game in rough village-green fashion. Dickens, who described a cricket match in "Pickwick," could not have made his description, so far as it was a sketch from nature, more unlike the real thing if he had been Count Smorltork himself. De Wint, however, is right as far as he goes. The regret of the cricketer who takes an historical interest in the national English game is that De Wint did not proceed a step or two farther. The drawing was made in 1815, when Nyren and Lambert were arousing interest in cricket, and neither the bowling nor the batting, nor the implements employed in the pastime, had lost their countrified character. "Cricketers" may be accepted by the historian, at any rate, as evidence that, in those days, Surrey as well as Kent was a cricket county.

De Wint was neither as compliant with nor as confident in the earlier speculative enterprise of the water-colour societies as, for example, David Cox proved; consequently, he sustained no pecuniary loss from participating in the misfortune which at one



FRONT DRAWING-ROOM

*Old English Satinwood Commode painted by Angelica Kaufmann, R.A.  
With Turner's "Okehampton" and "Bolton Abbey," formerly belonging to John Ruskin*





## *James Orrock*

period beset the co-operative efforts of the brotherhood. He was cautious as well as thrifty. We learn from the historian that he withdrew from the Water-Colour Society, and on being requested to return to the fold, with the inducement of being made a full member without passing through the grade of associateship, he declined "for the present." On a repetition of this offer, after another interval of three or four years, he accepted it. We may shrewdly infer that, with the sagacity of his breeding, he had satisfied himself of the commercial safety of the step. That was De Wint all over.

Lincolnshire, with Yorkshire and Wales, proved most fascinating to De Wint as sketching ground. He paid one visit to France, and painted from sketches made during his brief tour in that country, but with imperfect sympathy. His heart of hearts is ever to be found in his home-work. It is presumed that two drawings of a Scotch and Irish subject respectively were executed by him from supplied sketches, as there is no record or tradition relating to his visiting either country. His sunny hayfields evoked from Thackeray a humorous compliment: "Fuseli, who said that you must put up an umbrella to look at Constable's showers, might have called for a pot of porter at seeing one of De Wint's hay-makings." De Wint spent long days and many of them, which one regrets were not employed in creative work, in the drudgery of teaching. He was a conscientious instructor, but, if some of the stories related of him are true, he gave nothing away, and insisted, as he did in all his bargains, on his pound of flesh. He charged and extracted his utmost fee for "extras," and he based all his agreements on guineas, not pounds. When it was pointed out that guineas had gone out of the currency, he replied that the extra shillings were for his wife. Strenuously sturdy in the maintenance of himself and his rights, he was, at the same time, the most conscientious of men. No artist has done finer drawings for the publishers than De Wint. The drawings which he executed for important illustrated works, in some cases from sketches by

## *James Orrock*

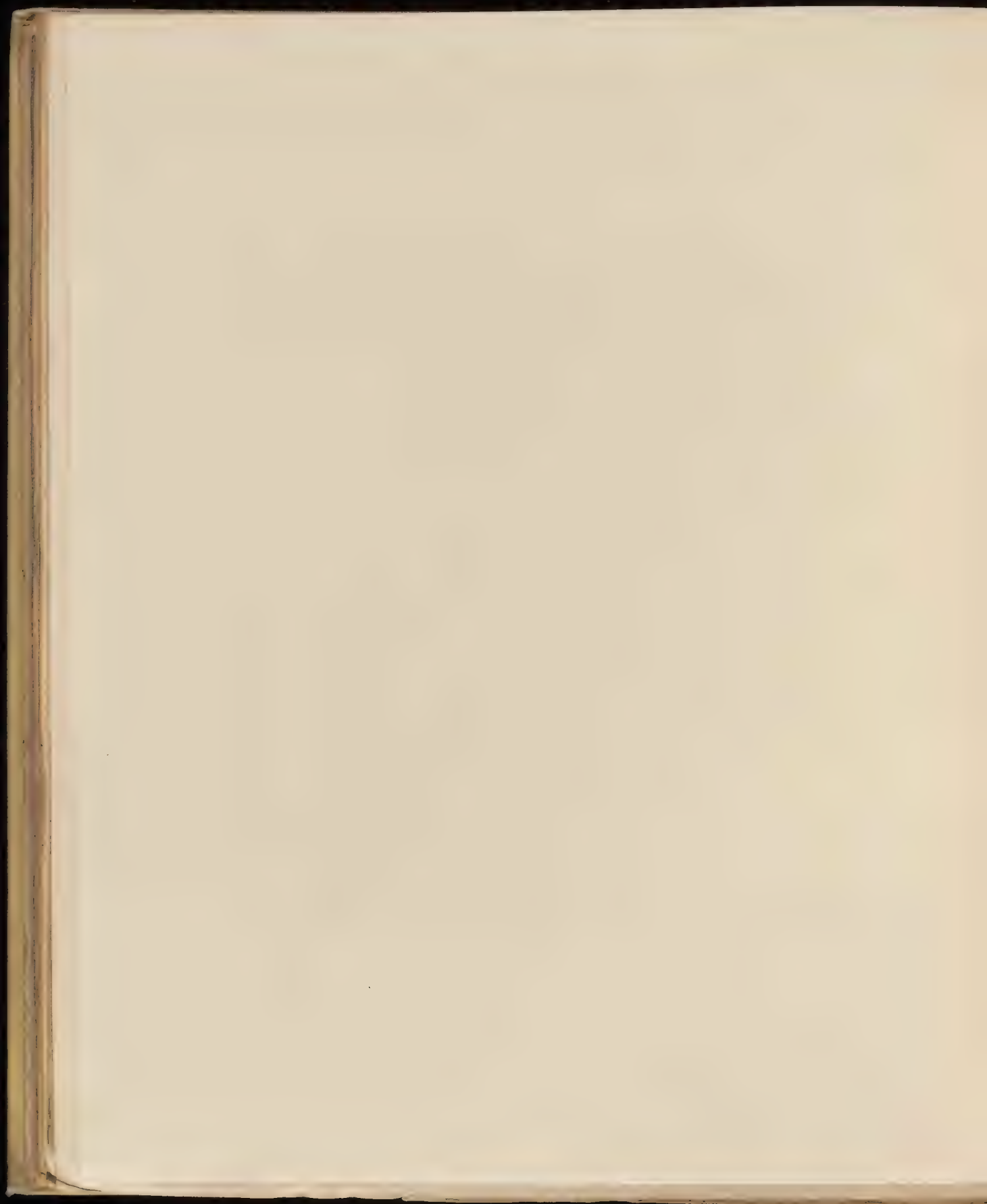
other hands, rank with the best examples extant of that description of art. He could inform bald topography with life and sentiment, and make noble pictures of commonplace facts, while keeping the likeness of the latter with identifiable exactness.

There is some difference of opinion on the part of his biographers respecting the personal character of De Wint. One of them speaks of "his pleasant manners and kindly nature." Another says "he was a good hater." Well, a good hater of ignoble men and deeds generally has a warm corner in his heart and a reverence in his soul for nobility in both. His pleasant manners and kindly nature were not invariably on view. He kept them, no doubt, for his friends and his fireside. He had, to use the familiar saying, a rough side to his tongue, and he was not slow, on provocation, to employ its rasping pungency. But there was humour in his asperity, and occasionally, as the following anecdote will show, a sturdy punitive spirit in his humour. He was one of the first of the artists to show his works before sending-in day. In his case, of course, the impending Exhibition was that of the old Water-Colour Society in Pall Mall. A wealthy friend of De Wint's had lamented year after year that the very drawings which he would have purchased were sold before he saw them. When the show day recurred, he came, he saw, and he repeated the well-known lament. "Now, De Wint," he cried, "those are exactly the things I should like to buy: what a pity they are sold!" "My dear sir," said the painter, "I knew you would like them, so I put the tickets on to keep them for you;" and the unwilling purchaser was compelled to take them, "otherwise," said the painter, "I should have shown him the door."

Picture-dealers, like picture-makers, are a mixed community, and are to be dealt with on their individual merits. It is repeating a truism to avow that there are men of the highest honour and soundest business integrity belonging to both orders. If, on the one hand, there are painters who will have no dealings whatever with the middleman, there are others, and a far greater number,



*Fishing on father's sea beach.*





## *James Orrock*

who all their professional lives have, to use the common phrase, "painted for the dealers," and who have nothing but praise for the fair and even handsome treatment they have habitually received from them. The dealer question is nearly, if not quite, as old as Art itself. Pilkington says of Jaques Bakker, who was born in 1530, that after the death of his father (who was also a painter) "he got into the clutches of one of those vipers in art, a picture-dealer, of the name of Jacopo Palermo, who took care to keep him incessantly employed, sending his pictures from Antwerp to Paris, where they were much admired, and eagerly purchased at a great price; yet the poor artist was defrauded of his talents, and kept in the same depressed and obscure situation." This was indeed "an awful example." In these days, when picture-dealers are in discussion and some rare modern disgrace to a community that has done so much for art is denounced, the loyal service of large-minded and generous members of the trade should not be forgotten. Linnell's father was a frame-maker and picture-dealer. The father of William Collins, who painted "Happy as a King" and other popular pictures, and grandfather of Wilkie Collins the novelist, was author, journalist, and—picture-dealer. It would be invidious to mention the names of dealers who have discovered artists, befriended artists, and substantially patronised artists when private buyers were not forthcoming, but a list, and not a short one, of such men might readily be compiled. If it had not been for the dealers, many artists had passed away like the "mute inglorious Milton" Gray speaks of in the Elegy. There is one dealer known all over the world, and so well and admiringly known that his name need scarcely be disclosed, who has done more to foster, encourage, and establish the fame of English Art and artists in our time than an army of private patrons. Indeed, he has called scores of the latter into being, and compelled them to accept his guidance. It may be doubted whether there is a member of the splendid trade anywhere who would question the truth of this statement, or grudge the embodied tribute to Sir William Agnew. However, Peter De Wint disliked "the

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dealer," but it came to pass that in one notable instance his repugnance was overcome. The anecdote is familiar, but it will bear recapitulation. It was not until about the year 1844 that he was induced to make an exception to his rule in favour of a single dealer, Mr. Vokins. De Wint had told him, in his surly way, that he only made drawings for "gentlemen." "Make me a gentleman's drawing then," said Vokins, "and I will pay you a gentleman's price." The case so put, the artist's pride remained untouched, and during his few remaining years he had many dealings with the Vokins firm.

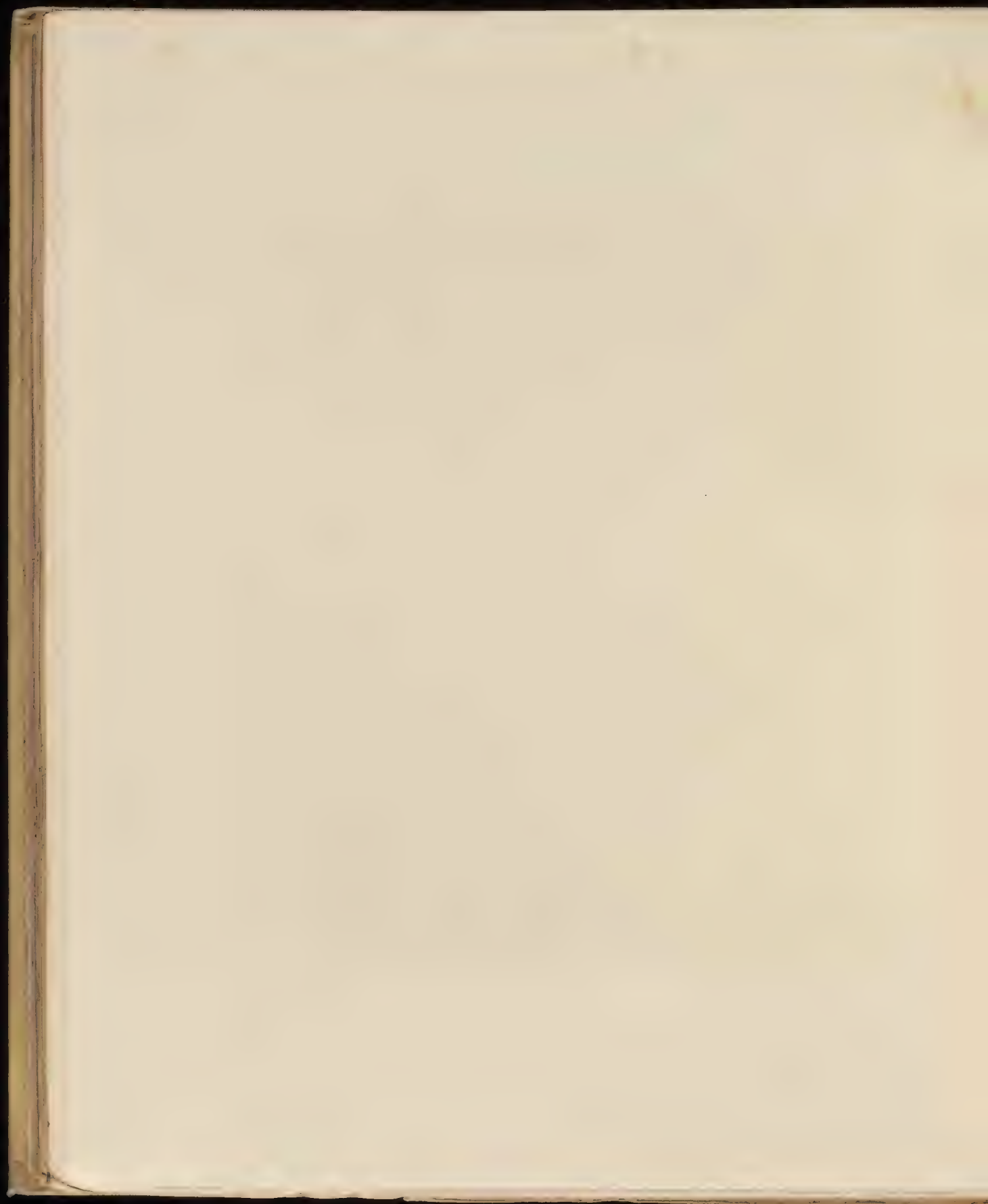
One cannot resist the impression that if more were known of Peter De Wint as a man the sterling worth of his character would be more appreciated. He fought a strenuous and uphill fight for wife and child and independence, with his heart and soul in his art. Neither a club man nor a Bohemian, little was known of his somewhat wrapped-up nature even by his brother artists outside the domestic circle, or that of the homes of his immediate friends. He was a devoutly religious man, and he loved with an abiding love the poetry which his wife read to him while he was at work. He was too deeply absorbed in fulfilling what he regarded as the simple duty of his life to care for aught but the solid fruit of fame. The time had to come for the poetry with which he charged his painting to be recognised. Alaric Watts, who found poetry in the painting of George Barret, was, we are disposed to infer, blind to its existence in De Wint's pictures. At any rate, he deplores a delay in the publication of an engraving of a drawing of Windsor Castle by De Wint, lest certain alterations which were being made in the building should impair its apparent accuracy. If Peter De Wint had been a *poseur*, a conversationalist, like Northcote, or a writer either on his or any other subject, we should have known the man better. Whether we should have esteemed him more is doubtful. He was a sturdy soul and a great painter, and he lives to our exquisite content in his Art.



of the 18th century

of the 18th century

*The Vorshuck picture.*





## CHAPTER X

George Barret, R.A.—His beginnings—A premium-winner—One of the Founders of the Royal Academy—His more illustrious son—Character and early career—The last of Mr. Orrock's "Four Pillars"—Mr. Orrock's estimate and account of Barret's technique and practice—Barret's oil pictures—"The Barret Fraud"—A startling detection—Alaric Watts and Barret—Accused of imitating Claude—Eloquent defence—Sad closing days—Watts's poetical tribute.

ALL that is commonly known of George Barret's father, the R.A., might be printed within the limits of a Sunday tract or a political leaflet. He was one of the founders of the Royal Academy, is considered by some to have established his style on Richard Wilson, and declared by a writing, painting, and fighting fellow-countryman to be an imitator of Claude. He was the son of a Dublin clothier, was apprenticed to a staymaker, went to West's drawing academy in that city, and coloured prints for a Dublin publisher. Freed eventually from both kinds of drudgery, he, under the advice of no less distinguished a person than Edmund Burke, "went to nature," and in time became skilful enough and fortunate enough as a landscape painter to win the premium of £50 offered by the Royal Dublin Society in a competition with compatriot artists. On his removal to London, Barret entered upon a successful career. Lord Powerscourt patronised him. He won the premium of £50 in a competition, "the first of its kind," offered by the Society of Arts for the best landscape. He was an original member of the Royal Academy. Northcote in his "Life of Reynolds" mentions, amongst the principal works exhibited at the opening show in 1769, "a capital landscape of Penton Lynn, in Scotland, by Mr. Barrett" (*sic*). The Rev. John Lock, a patron of his, commissioned him to cover one of the principal rooms of his house at Norbury in Surrey, "from the skirting to the ceiling, with a series of scenes." These

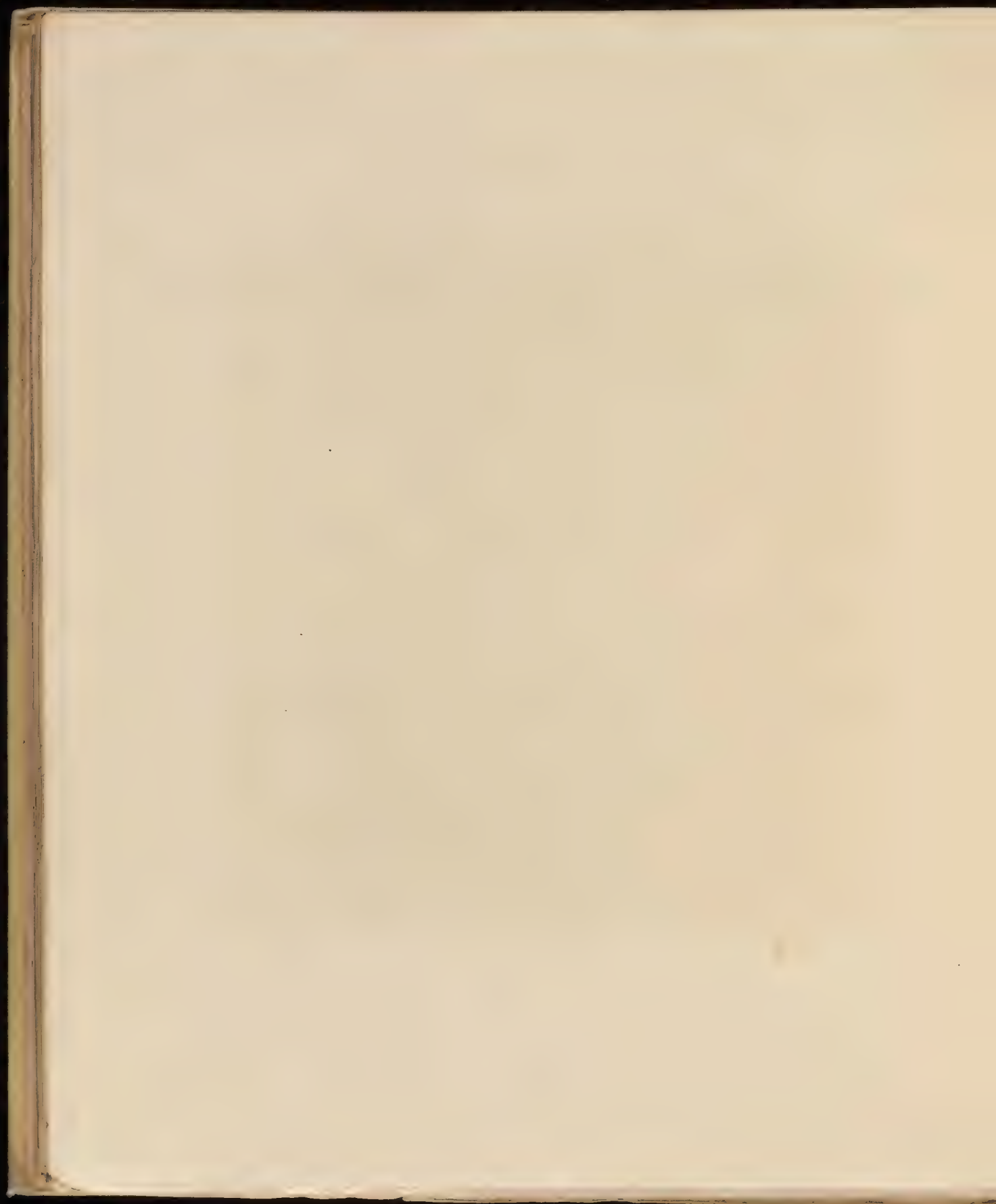
## *James Orrock*

had the accepted, nay more, the applauded defect of his quality, being just as near and no nearer to Nature than the work of his dead-level contemporaries in what was called Historical Art. He painted according to the approved recipe, was a bold and dexterous picture-producer according to his lights, won for the time extraordinary popularity, and yet, after working for a period prolonged enough to have left him possessed of a comfortable competency, he was compelled by reason of his extravagant habits to accept the sinecure appointment of master-painter at Chelsea Hospital, procured for him by his steadfast friend and patron Edmund Burke. It is stated that at his death he left his wife and family entirely dependent on the bounty of the Royal Academy.

Concerning painters' sons who have followed their fathers' footsteps many chapters might be written. There are more ancient than modern instances of this kind of family succession in art, especially in the Continental schools. There has been nothing like an exact parallel in our day to the art-relationship of George Barret and his father. The nearest approach to a likeness is perhaps afforded by George Cole and his son Vicat. While, however, there is little in the landscapes of the latter painter to remind the observer of the distinctive character of his father's pictures, it is perhaps worthy of a passing note that both George Barret and his father the R.A. were accused of imitating Claude. We shall meet with the defence of the younger and greater Barret against the, so far as he was concerned, groundless accusation, in a succeeding page. That he was taught, and well taught (as a Mrs. Trimmer would say), in his father's school is evident from the testimony borne by his earliest drawings. A member of an impoverished family, he had to "turn out" and make a livelihood by giving lessons in drawing and by contributing his part to combination pictures, as well as by the execution of drawings exclusively his own. We find, in 1796, his name attached to an exhibited view of Lord Grantley's seat, the horses



*The Timber Wagon.*





## James Orrock

by Sawry Gilpin; and a scene in the Highlands, the portraits by Reinagle, the horses again by Gilpin. Resembling David Cox and De Wint in his single-minded devotion to his art, a poet who spoke with equal grace and placidity through his pen as well as with the pencil, his one little world the home he loved and lived for, outside his pictures and published letters George Barret is but little known. "He was of frugal and industrious habits," writes Redgrave, "and though poor, he aimed more at excellence in his art than gain." The same authority adds, "Barret was of a liberal nature, and, struggling with difficulties himself, endeavoured to clear them from the path of others. We well remember, in our student days, his being questioned by a group of young artists, in what was then called the Angerstein Gallery, where he was copying a picture, as to his mode of painting. He willingly explained to them his practice, and declared that no good painter ought to have 'secrets.' 'Everything is in the painter's feeling,' said he; 'without feeling, all the secrets in the world are worthless.'"

Writes Mr. Orrock in his *Art Journal* essay: "George Barret, the last of the Four Pillars of the Great English School of Water-Colour Painters, was, like Claude, Poussin, Turner, and Wilson, imbued with an irresistible feeling for classical landscape; and in these days, when little or nothing but direct studies from nature is asked for, Barret's classic work is thrust aside and libelled as artificial and conventional. In landscape, however, the classical painters were not more conventional than the famous figure-painters. Studies of details and general composition were made for their grand pictures, and the posing and grouping of the occurring figures were artistically, or, if you like, conventionally placed in the work, so as to make a picture. In fact, they were as studied and as conventional as the most classical Claude in existence. If, therefore, the works of the renowned figure-painters are accepted, why not those of the great landscape painters? Admitting that classical landscape is artificial and conventional, this description of it can only apply to the building-up of the subject, the

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delineation of which can be reduced to bare *outlines*. Those great masters painted gradation from foreground to extreme distance, they represented light, space, tone, purity and depth of colour, grace of lines, and the balance of parts; moreover, they produced a grand unity of the whole as to harmony and keeping. Can such faculty for perceiving, such feeling for the intense poetry of the scene, and power of infinite expression be successfully claimed by the new 'fiddle-players,' whose crutches merely take them to roadside nature, and bring them home again? Besides, such studies or pictures (so-called), transcribed direct from nature, are either in their small way arranged or composed, or taken haphazard in the manner of the volatile photographer who snaps his instrument at that which comes first. To the densely ignorant, however, any more or less apparently faithful reproduction of an aspect of nature, selected or unselected, has a charm, and the term 'unconventional' makes his heart leap! Put the case otherwise. Are we to place a commodity called a picture, which has, without selection, been literally painted from nature, like a coloured photograph, on a level with the accomplished work of a gifted artistic mind? If the verdict be given in favour of the great, the true, the creative artist, then it is only reasonable to conclude that the best composer in respect of artistic arrangement of lines, masses, and colour, the painter whose work displays in every touch the always-felt but well-nigh indescribable spirit of his art, will, as heretofore, reign supreme.

"One of Barret's *unconventional* practices was to paint light and brilliancy, and to represent space, and as a painter of light he has had no rival, save and except Cuyp. For the satisfaction, however, of the purely unconventional mind, be it noted that he frequently painted subjects of every-day nature. The author of 'The Earlier English Water-Colour Painters' refers in his essay on George Barret to the master's drawings of English subjects, and he gives as an example the 'Timber-waggon,' which I have the honour to possess. It is my good fortune to have also in

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my collection other English subjects by George Barret, 'Twilight,' 'The Inn-door,' and 'Going to the Fair' being amongst the number. Barret may be said to have brought the art of pure water-colour painting to perfection. In his book, which is written in the form of letters, called 'The Theory and Practice of Water-Colour Painting,' he clearly describes the gradual development of the art, from the early days of *tinting* with pure colours drawings which had previously been painted in black-and-white or in neutral colours. He ascribes to Warwick Smith (so named because the Earl of Warwick was his patron) the honour of first emerging from this dark and sombre process. It was reserved, however, for the celebrated members of the 'Old Society' to complete what Smith had begun. William Hunt and Barret perfected the use of the pure colouring, and it would seem as though they have left behind them works which it would be impossible to excel. Barret's process was less direct and rapid than that of Cox, De Wint, or Turner. His method was to paint first in clear, limpid colours, brilliant and thin. He afterwards added more colour to these washes, and continued the operation until the work in that respect was done. He then 'lifted' colour nearly all over his drawing, invariably giving full value to the first bright lay-in. He also washed and granulated his skies, and scraped and cut out clouds, which he could not, by his system of painting, otherwise leave sharp and clean. Barret was as original in his method as any of the Four Pillars, and there are many refined judges who prefer his work to any other. At times, one is sorry to say, he fell into the trap of using Indian red in the shape of washes to give tone to the first condition of his drawing. The examples of his art upon which, oblivious of the consequences, he used Indian red have manifestly undergone a change, and become what is termed 'foxy.' Fortunately, however, they are but seldom met with.

"Of all the great water-colour painters, Barret was the least appreciated, and, after a hard and desperate struggle for a liveli-

## James Orrock

hood, he died in poverty. A quarter of a century ago, beautiful drawings by this splendidly original master might have been purchased for a few pounds. The price in these days for *one* of his first-rate drawings would have made him independent.

"In oil, like Cox, Holland, De Wint, Fielding, and John Lewis, he was also a master, and as original as he was in water-colours, with the same peculiar feeling for light, atmosphere, and purity of process. It is not too much to say that a fine oil-painting by Barret will hold its own with great paintings in that medium by any of the masters. It may be mentioned for the satisfaction of the unconventionalists that his best oil pictures are nearly all English in subject. He was fond of painting horses and cattle, and his knowledge of tree forms and foreground vegetation was both minute and extensive. His figures were quaint and sometimes clumsy, but always artistic and in harmony with his style.

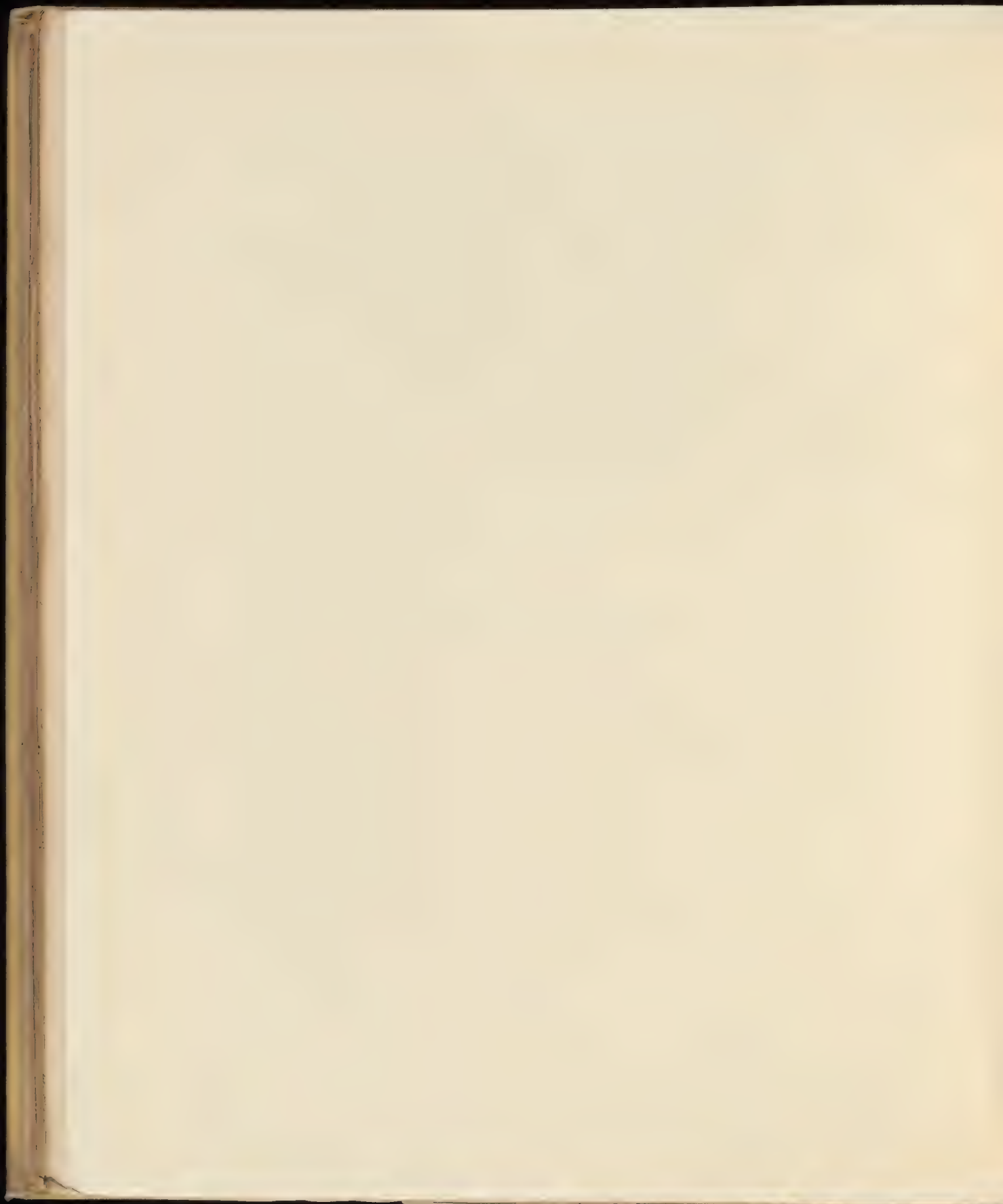
"Since the world of Pictorial Art began, it is doubtful whether a more prodigious swindle has ever been palmed on the public than what is known among connoisseurs and collectors as the Barret Fraud. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of drawings which were painted by Barret's nephew were sold as his uncle's work. They were painted, however, in good faith by the essentially inferior relative of the master, and sold by him as his own handiwork at a modest price. He was a pupil of his uncle's, and undoubtedly a skilled water-colour painter. So far as the nephew of Barret was concerned, it was no forgery; but certain dealers made it one. The fraud was discovered at Coventry. At the time of the disclosure there resided at the town in question an expert who possessed a choice collection of drawings by the English masters. It so happened that a friend, who was also a collector and connoisseur, paid him a visit. To the collection I have mentioned there had quite recently been added what appeared to be a choice and brilliant Barret. It was duly admired, and passed, but *by lamplight*; the visitor, however, making the





WEST WALL OF FRONT DRAWING-ROOM

*Painted Satinwood Commode with Panels by Angelica Kaufmann, R.A.*



## James Orrock

remark that he would much like to examine the drawing by daylight. Next morning it was submitted to another and more careful inspection, when objection was taken to the placing of the figures and cattle in the landscape, and a doubt was cast upon the signature as well as on the touching of the foliage. The owner, who was unquestionably a fine judge, and his contention therefore entitled to the utmost respect, stoutly disputed every point and argument advanced to prove the spurious character of the drawing. Thus far it had been a conflict of connoisseurship and expertism: opinion against opinion. The visitor—and sceptic—was, however, as sure of his ground as a man who was perfectly familiar with every stroke in ‘the handwriting’ of the master could be, and he said, ‘Take the drawing out of the frame!’ This was done. When the drawing was held up against the light there blazed, as it were, before the fevered eye of the possessor the following words in the water-mark: ‘JAMES WHATMAN, TURKEY MILLS, 1867.’ Barret had been dead just a quarter of a century before that sheet of paper was manufactured! Numbers of these spurious Barrets are ‘floating about,’ and in private collections, and it is possible that many so-called experts will be deceived by them for evermore.

“One—and possibly the chief—reason why Barret was unappreciated by Mr. Dilettante was in consequence of the somewhat laboured and pedantic look which his pictures had. He was, in fact, too classical in his work, and lacked the ‘rush’ and ‘go’ of the swift sketcher from nature. He had not the swing and travelling light of David Cox, or that master’s sharp and accidental dash in scudding sky or dripping rain-cloud. The weight of tumbling water or the *abandon* of a wild sea he never attempted to realise, nor could he be happy to leave the blooming mosaics which we find in the shade of a De Wint. No, Barret had other aims. He must perforce ‘lift’ his colour all over his drawing, to bring forth tone, chiaroscuro, and oneness of pictorial harmony. Above all, his soul was only satisfied where

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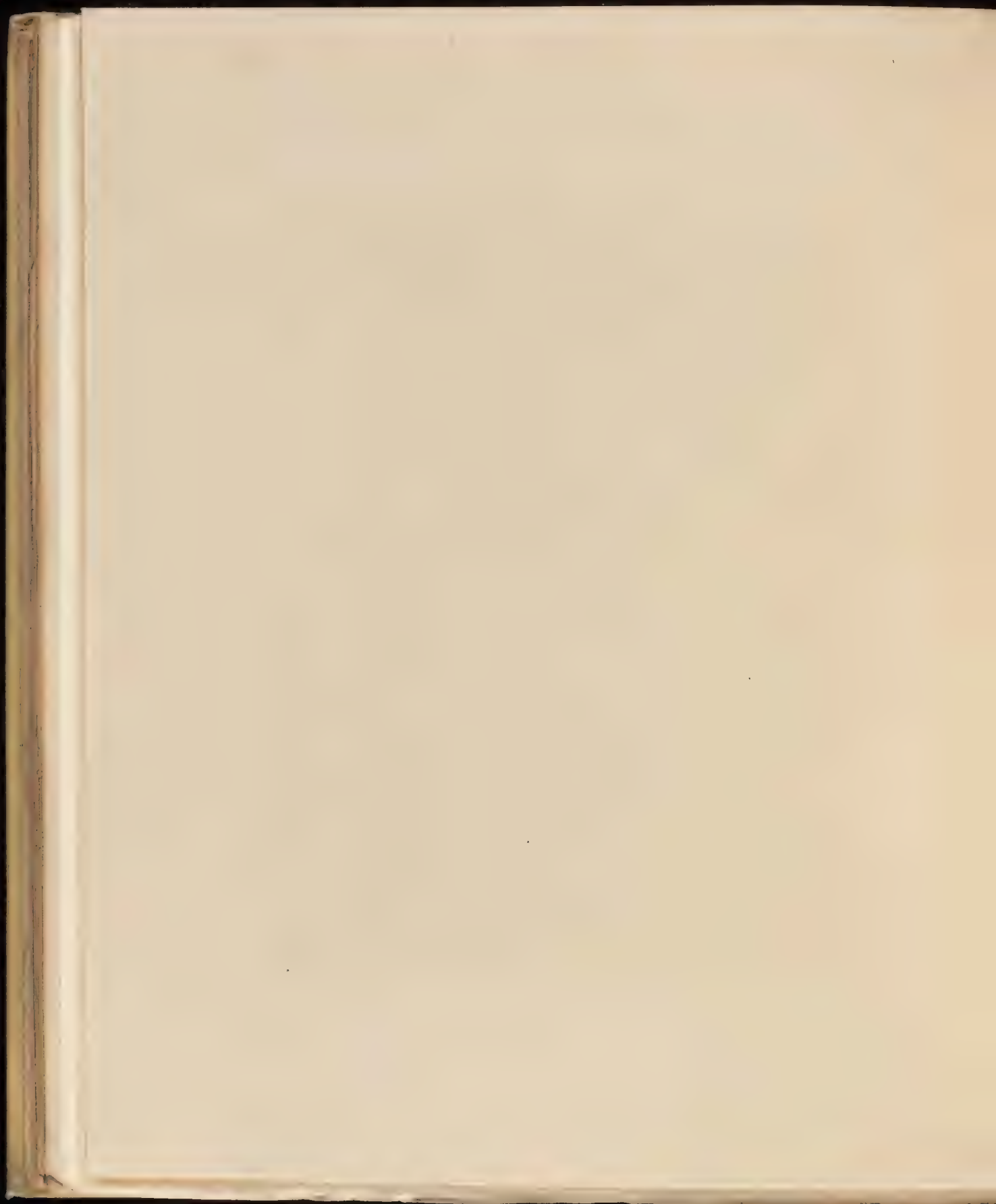
his landscape was bathed in sunshine. If these qualities, superbly felt and expressed, make a master, then was Barret a master without a rival. As I have said before, he was as original as any of the other Three Pillars, and it is not too much to say that some of the most cultivated and sensitive among connoisseurs would choose a fine Barret before all others."

The author of "The Earlier English Water-Colour Painters" (Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse) says, "What this" (the Barret family) "consisted of, and when George Barret, junior, was born, are not known apparently, but he had one brother and a sister who both painted in water-colours. The latter was a pupil of George Romney, according to Graves's Dictionary, and of Mrs. Mee, according to Redgrave. Both appear to have been older than George." One of George Barret's profoundest admirers was Alaric Watts. A glowing tribute to the painter by the author of "Ten Years Ago" and other charming poems, not only bears testimony to his perfect appreciation of the painter's genius, but affords us a glimpse, all too brief, of the man. Watts was the originator of the high-class *Literary Annual*, and being himself a man of fine and catholic taste in art as well as an accomplished critic and appreciator of contemporary literature, with a wide acquaintance amongst leading painters and writers, he brought together within the scope of his undertaking such examples of pictorial and literary genius as had never been seen in such association before, nor ever combined since. He enjoyed the warm friendship of Constable and George Barret, and was on terms of intimacy with Etty, Landseer, Leslie, Uwins, Collins, Maclise, John Martin, and other leading painters. He visited Paris with Uwins and Etty, and it is not unworthy of note that he was struck, while there, with the remarkable fact that a rage for English *aquarelles* was prevalent in the French capital. It is to be regretted that the "Life of Alaric Watts," by his son, is so barren of references to many of the painters with whom the poet was brought into constant contact. He could no doubt





*Classical Landscape*



## *James Orrock*

have told us much about Turner and De Wint, and he might have disclosed many things we should have been glad to know concerning Barret. Even Mrs. Watts, whose reminiscences comprehend glimpses of Northcote and Westall, is silent on the subject of the painter whom her husband so profoundly esteemed. And yet the gentle Quakeress must have been as admiringly familiar as her beloved Alaric was with the painter's creations in picture and verse, if, as to the man, the saddest of the sad circumstances of Barret's closing days were outside her knowledge. The omission of all reference to him by Mrs. Watts is the more remarkable, because Barret was a true poet as well as a painter. She could say of Westall that, "in addition to his being a painter of real genius, he wrote good verse," and yet she was silent about George Barret, to whom the observation about Westall would have applied with juster force. It is from a letter which Barret wrote to Watts, from 162 Devonshire Place, Edgware Road, September 1, 1834, we learn that the artist had, in a friendly way, been put on his defence with regard to the charge of imitating Claude, and had felt it incumbent on himself, while refuting the accusation, to read his accusers a grave and earnest lesson. He writes:—

"As I have so often been accused of repeating the effect of sunset, which I admit, and of imitating Claude, which I deny, I, as you request, take up my pen to refute the one, and to account for the other. When I first came to this house, it appeared too small to accommodate my family; but after having viewed the extensive prospect it afforded me of the splendid effects of the afternoon sun, which sets immediately opposite my window, I felt so forcibly the advantages to me, as an artist, that I took it, and have continued to reside here for the last twenty-four years.

"Thus situated, I should have evinced but little feeling either for my Art or the glorious effects of sunset had I not attempted to represent them; and I do assure you that in my endeavours to accomplish this, so desirable an object, neither Claude nor his pictures ever entered my head. It was, indeed, always too full of

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the gorgeous effects of the true original to admit of any copy, however good, occupying my mind. After having studied this effect for many years, taking Nature constantly for my guide, I should have been dull indeed had I not produced something to remind the spectator of what had given him also pleasure to contemplate in Nature. That I have in some degree succeeded I have reason to hope, from the ready sale of my afternoon effects, both in oil and water-colour, in the Exhibitions, and from the circumstance that nearly all the commissions I have been favoured with have been either for this effect, or that of twilight, which I have studied with ever-increasing assiduity and pleasure."

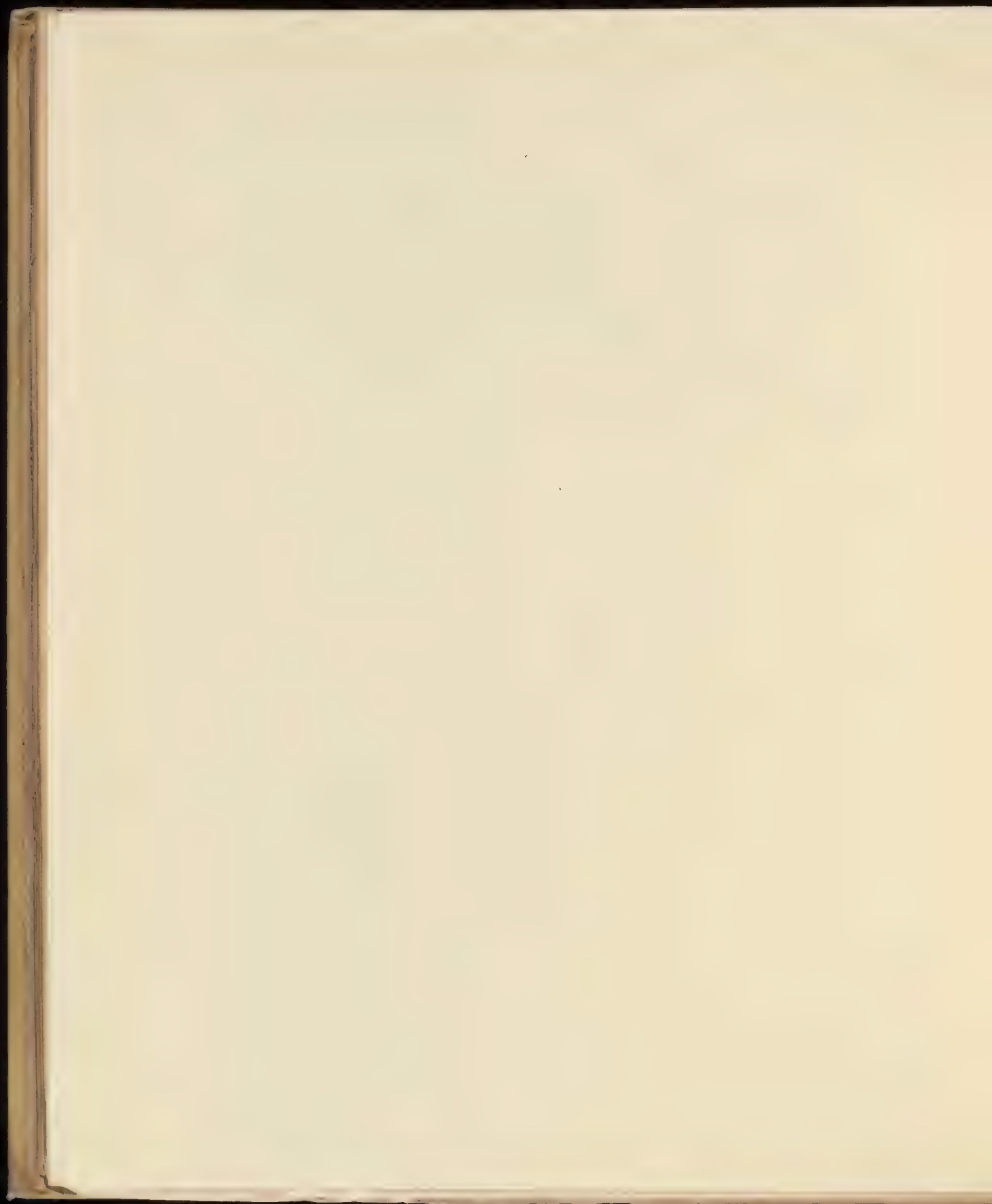
He adds that, notwithstanding all that has been urged against imitation, improvement and excellence depend mainly upon it. Further, that in the arts the beginner imitates that which others have executed, and if there be within him that spark called genius, his mind will expand as he proceeds, and, having thrown off the restraint which copying pictures imposes upon him, he will with ardour search for the truth in Nature as it is to be found in its pristine purity. As to landscape painting, where something superior to mere imitation is aimed at, the writer observes that it cannot be taught like the copying of individual objects or local scenes. It must be the result of innate fine feeling. The painter who has the true feeling for his art seeks in Nature equally with the poet for the *means* to enable him to express his ideas. The leading principles put forward in Barret's earnest exposition are exclusively given in this brief summary. In the concluding passage of his eloquent letter he, speaking for himself, his visions, and their lovely realisation, says:—

"I love to contemplate the dawn when stillness reigns on every side, and, undisturbed, to watch the kindling tints as the glorious sun approaches the horizon. I admire the effects of mid-day light, when beneath the shade of stately trees I rest secure from its dazzling blaze. Still more do I admire the saffron glow of the afternoon sun. But the twilight, the solemn, sober twilight, is to me supreme; for this is the time when the imagina-





WOODHOUSE MILL, LEICESTERSHIRE, FROM BEACON HILL. (WATER-COLOUR SKETCH.) 1872.



## James Orrock

tion, unfettered, takes its flight. This is the hour when, to the eye of fancy, shady groves, towers, palaces, and lakes are conjured up, with, perhaps, some object moving in the deep shade, uncertain to the sight, so as to stimulate and delight the pensive mind. But return to the spot the following day, and view it in the glare of mid-day sunshine. You will then find, perhaps, that the shady grove is now nothing more than a common clump of trees; your towers, stacks of chimneys; palaces, brick-houses; the lake, a stagnant pool, and the mysterious object a harmless cow or donkey. Still, *this* is the effect that is so pleasing to a majority of persons. There is plenty to look at; they can point out and reckon each individual object; all is upon the optic nerve, and penetrates no deeper."

Seldom has an Artist on Himself had so little to say for self and so much for the purpose that was in him, and his absorbing desire to employ it to a noble end. Those Claude-like effects, in which his purblind critics detected Claude and Claude only, George Barret studied for twenty-four years in and about the region of prosaic Paddington! And yet, not entirely prosaic. Robert Browning's English home, the situation of which he enjoyed and the almost Venice-like picturesqueness of which he admired, was in Maida Vale. George Barret's Paddington and Edgware Road country was very different from the bricks-and-mortar, the stucco, the "residential" London suburb of the present day.

Reference is made by Mr. Orrock to the painter's "hard and desperate struggle for a livelihood." The last years of his life were especially clouded with misfortunes. The loss of his eldest son, whom he had educated as a surgeon, his own long illness, together with inevitable pecuniary embarrassments, were set forth in a public appeal which was made for subscriptions to provide an annuity for his widow. Alaric Watts's lines to his memory (which appeared in *Howitt's Journal*, with the stanza from Gray's *Elegy* beginning

"One morn I missed him on the accustomed hill"

## James Orrock

prefixed) in every sense supplies an appropriate conclusion to the present chapter. The "Memory of George Barret" could not have been more tenderly enshrined.

"Worthy disciple of his art divine,  
Whose golden sunsets, rich romantic shores,  
And pastoral vales, reflect fair Nature's face,  
In every varying charm her beauty wears,  
How have I loved thy pencil! Not a grace  
Shed over earth from yon blue vault above,  
At dawn, noon, sunset, twilight, or when night  
Draws o'er the sleeping world her silvery veil,  
But thou hast traced its source and made thine own!  
Nay, not an hour that circles through the day,  
But thou hast marked its influence on the scene,  
And touched each form with corresponding light;  
Till all subdued the landscape round assumes—  
Like visions seen through hope's enchanted glass—  
A beauty not its own; and 'cloud-capped towers,'  
And 'gorgeous palaces,' and temples reared,  
As if by magic, line the busy strand  
Of some broad sea, that ripples on in gold  
To meet the setting sun! Nor less I prize  
Thy solemn twilight glooms; when to mine eye,  
Indefinite each object takes the shape  
That fancy lists; and in the crimsoned west,  
Bright as the memory of a blissful dream,  
As unsubstantial too, the daylight fades,  
And 'leaves the world to darkness and to me.'  
Primitive Painter! Neither age nor care,  
Nor failing health,—though all conspired to mar  
The calmness of thy soul,—could dim the power  
Thy pencil caught from truth. Thou shouldst have lived,  
Where sunny Claude his inspiration drew,  
By Arno's banks, in Tempe's haunted vale;  
Or learned Poussin, 'neath the umbrageous oaks  
Of some old forest, led his sylvan groups,  
Goddess with Mortal, Faun with Dryad joined,  
To Pan's untutored music circle round.  
For such the themes thy chastened fancy loved:  
But now thy sun has set, thy twilight sunk  
In deepest night, and thou hast sought a sky  
Where never cloud or shade can vex thee more."



## CHAPTER XI

William Hunt—A perfect master of technique—"Living Leaves from the Book of Nature"—Hunt's use of body-colour—Hunt on Turner—Mr. Ruskin on "The Blessing"—Hunt's singular dexterity with the knife—Oils and water-colours—"The Dutchman disappears in such a presence"—A letter from Mr. Ruskin—Hunt's birth, parentage, and bringing up—Hunt and Linnell at John Varley's and Dr. Munro's—Their after-intercourse—Letter to a dealer—Mr. Orrock's first meeting with Hunt—A little lecture on colour-composition—"Bud-nests to please the women"—The unappeasable jackals—The studio—Another lesson in colour—Hunt at Hastings—A traditional footprint found by Mr. Bernard Evans—The last time Hunt exhibited—Extraordinary range of subjects—The opinions of Mr. W. M. Rossetti—Mr. Ruskin's glowing tribute—Hunt's London abode in a water-colour neighbourhood—Cristall, Mackenzie, George Chambers, the Brothers Callow, and James Holland—Anecdote of James Holland and George Lance—Visit to 62 (now 170) Stanhope Street.

"**W**ILLIAM HUNT," writes Mr. Orrock in his fifth essay, published in the *Art Journal*, "although often scornfully called the painter of cowboys and birds' nests, was a greater master of his own material, namely, water-colours, than any artist who has painted in that medium. From water-colours he extracted more of nature's truths than any other painter, Cox not excepted. Both artists were also perfect masters of technique, and they never 'fumbled' or 'fudged out' their themes, albeit 'fudging it out' was a term Hunt humorously employed to describe his method; on the contrary, at every stage they expressed their impressions deliberately and surely, giving the utmost value the material could yield. In other words, they never produced what is called 'feeling' by dulness and 'dirt.'"

"Hunt has sometimes been called the 'prentice pillar of the great group of English water-colourists; the fifth pillar of the five who may be said to have formed our great school. Strictly speaking, however, he was not a landscape painter, like the other

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four, although even in this department of Art, as I shall presently prove, he was as beautiful and as original as any of them. His genius has been scorned and despised because, like Burns and Wilkie, he chose his subjects chiefly from peasants and people in humble life. Every subject, however, he elevated as they did. It is said he had no imagination because he painted *direct* from nature, and could not, therefore, idealise a paid studio-model into a Madonna or a goddess, a seraph or a Saviour. Hunt's works were real; as real as Raeburn's great portrait of Scott, which expressed the soul and character of his subject. In those he gave us discourses on colour, modelling, artistic selection and arrangement, and in addition unrivalled technique. If Hunt's subjects are wanted, his, and his treatment of them alone, will be called for, since he has never had even the ghost of a rival. Turner himself was wanting in such mastery of the material, and dreamers may dream of a second Turner, but they can never dream of a second Hunt. Hunt exhausted his own subjects; he has left nothing beyond.

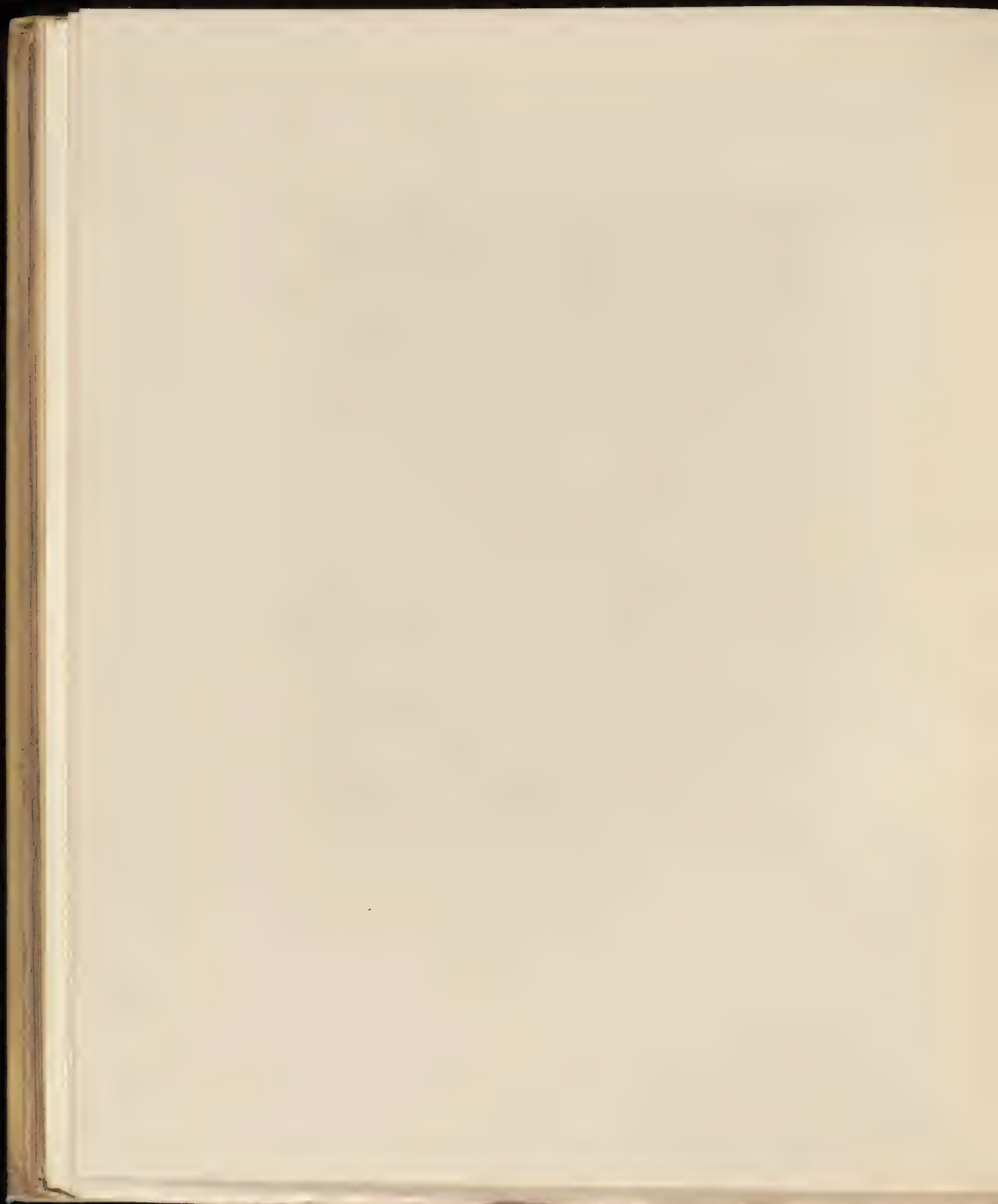
"His love of nature was so intense and full that his pictures of primroses and violet-banks lead us to the woods; to God's gardens, where he worshipped; to the meadows sweet, among grasses and wild flowers; and to the summer sun. After such lovely realisations, one may be pardoned for smiling at pitiable and puerile performances in the shape of studies of cut flowers arranged in regulation vases, some of which, we are told, are the work of *masters*. Hunt was, moreover, a loving painter of rustic life; he had vastly greater sympathy with common day labourers than he had with professional models, who sit for 'characters' as the subject demands. He knew his peasants, body and soul, and found among them what Burns and Dickens had found; hearts which could go out to Wilkie's 'Blind Fiddler' and 'The Rent Day'; and his peasants on their part loved their painter and encouraged him to fulfil his mission. The still-life, so called, which he so often painted, was to him part of *them*, and the



W. Scott. 1820.

W. Scott. 1820.

*Sir Walter Scott.*





## James Orrock

'accidents' of nature, which he found everywhere in honest English country life, breathed of the lowly bread-winners.

"The primroses and the may-sprays were not mere regulation 'vase' studies, but living leaves from the book of Nature. The commonest sea-shells and fishes interested him as absorbingly as they interest the scientist, and those objects, which were no more than are dulness and death to other workers in that field of nature, lived for ever in his art. From those wondrous regions of nature, far below the surface of attenuated and emasculated Art-fashions, Hunt, like the naturalists, sent to the surface numbers of divine jewels, and discoursed on their features, their laws, and their exquisite qualities, like the true painter he was. What he shows us is high Art, and the subject has little or nothing to do with it. Hunt's technique, and especially his brilliancy, is so extraordinary, that no box of pigments seems capable of supplying the source. The marvellous light and depth, however, are not produced with colours in juxtaposition, as they are in the box, but are made by laying one rich colour over another, starting, however, with a solid Chinese-white ground. In early life, Hunt painted without the use of body-colour, and it was not till his middle period that he used it. It is quite certain, however, that as no luminous sky can be represented with body-colour, so no still-life of the highest excellence can be produced without it. Hunt found this out, and left off the excessive employment of transparent colour when he painted his wondrous still-life pictures. He never, however, at any time used body-colour in his figure-painting. Body-colour painting in the ordinary sense means mixing the pigments with body-colour. Hunt never did this. He painted on body-colour, which was laid on the objects thick, and then left to dry to hardness. He would, for example, roughly pencil out a group of plums or grapes, and thickly coat each one with Chinese-white, which he would leave to harden. On this brilliant china-like ground he would put his colours, not in washes, but solid and sure, so as not to disturb the ground which he had prepared. By this process the utmost value

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for obtaining strength and brilliancy was secured, for the colours were made to 'bear out' and almost rival nature herself. Certain it is that no still-life painting can rival Hunt's drawings. Turner employed the same means when he painted in oil, in his later period; when he endeavoured in oil to rival the purity and aerial effects of water-colour. Hunt's backgrounds, however, were painted to a great extent with transparent colours, with the exception of portions of them such as the lichens, mossy grasses, &c., which were first prepared with white, like the chief objects in the drawing. By this subtle method a contrast was obtained between objects and background, and he secured also chiaroscuro, out of which the vital work came forth. Let any one try to copy a fine Hunt drawing, as the writer has frequently done, and he will find how dull and dead his copy is when compared with the original.

"Hunt was not only a superb rustic-figure and still-life painter, but a master in his interiors and landscape. His landscapes are strangely like those by John Linnell, in water-colour. The most interesting folios of Linnell's landscapes are at Redhill; and when the writer was shown them by Mr. William Linnell, he expressed his surprise at their marvellous resemblance to William Hunt's. Mr. Linnell said, 'Yes; my father and Hunt were fellow-pupils under John Varley, and Varley sent them to nature to make such studies as you see.' Hunt, therefore, was a first-rate landscape painter, at that early period, for his, like Linnell's, is master's work, and on a level in water-colours with one of the greatest of all masters of landscape. Curiously enough, in his own department he was also a rival of Turner. Mr. Fawkes, of Farnley, in Wharfedale, possessed an album of superb studies in colour by Turner, of dead birds and various still-life subjects. None but the keenest experts would distinguish these from early studies by Hunt, and the only difference is that Turner had not seized the character of colour and form in the marked manner of Hunt.

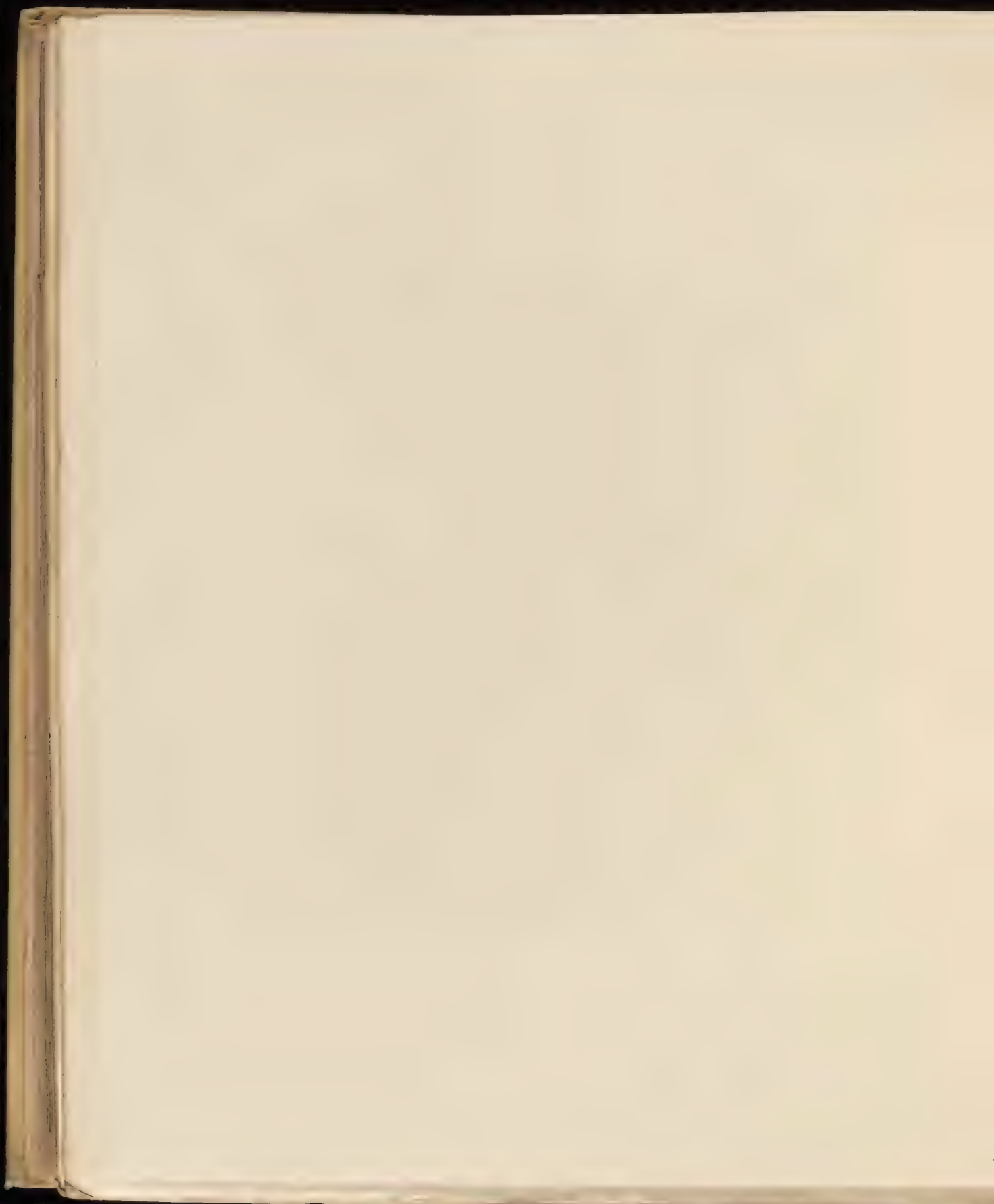
"Hunt was a consummate draughtsman. He could draw as delicately as Gainsborough or Cosway, and as vigorously as a



THE WHITE HORSE

THE WHITE HORSE

*The White Horse.*





## James Orrock

Venetian. His leading feature, however, was *character*. Everything he did possessed this rare quality, not only in drawing but in colour. No one need ever hope to reproduce the peculiar aspect of the primrose or the yellow grape, or, indeed, of anything Hunt painted, and expect to 'live' for a moment among the master's works! He used the lead point and the reed pen with consummate grace and masterly power. This can be perceived in many of his early portraits, and, as to muscular work, in his studies of St. Martin's Church, and in numbers of reed-pen pictures of figures and still-life. He was, in short, like the Nasmyth hammer, which can chip the wren's egg or forge the anchor of a man-of-war. Mr. Ruskin, among his numberless aphorisms, expresses this truth when he states, 'All great Art is delicate Art.'

"I knew Hunt personally, the man as well as the artist. Having had also the singular advantage of living for many years among numbers of Hunt's choicest works, I have no reserve in the encomiums I feel impelled to pass upon him. Hunt, as I have already pointed out, had an affection for the peasant, and 'The Blessing' might be a study for the centre-figure in Burns's 'Cottar's Saturday Night.' Here we have character, body, and soul, and the 'lyart haffets' which show that hard work and weariness are telling upon him. Those who knew Hunt felt that the humble cottar was his friend. In the cottage he found that 'hearts were more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood.' He painted what he saw and felt. He furthermore added emblems of the cottagers' lives, such as those golden banks with their mosses and grasses, sometimes quaintly concealing a bird's-nest which the peasant-boy had hidden. 'The Blessing,' which is in my own possession, represents a smock-frocked countryman expressing his thankfulness for his frugal meal. This splendid drawing is probably Hunt's masterpiece. Let the sneering æsthetic 'eye-glass' for a moment be focussed on this production of the cowboy painter, and observe what the

## James Orrock

simple artist could produce when his soul moved him. Mr. Ruskin said it was more than a sermon; it was a poem.

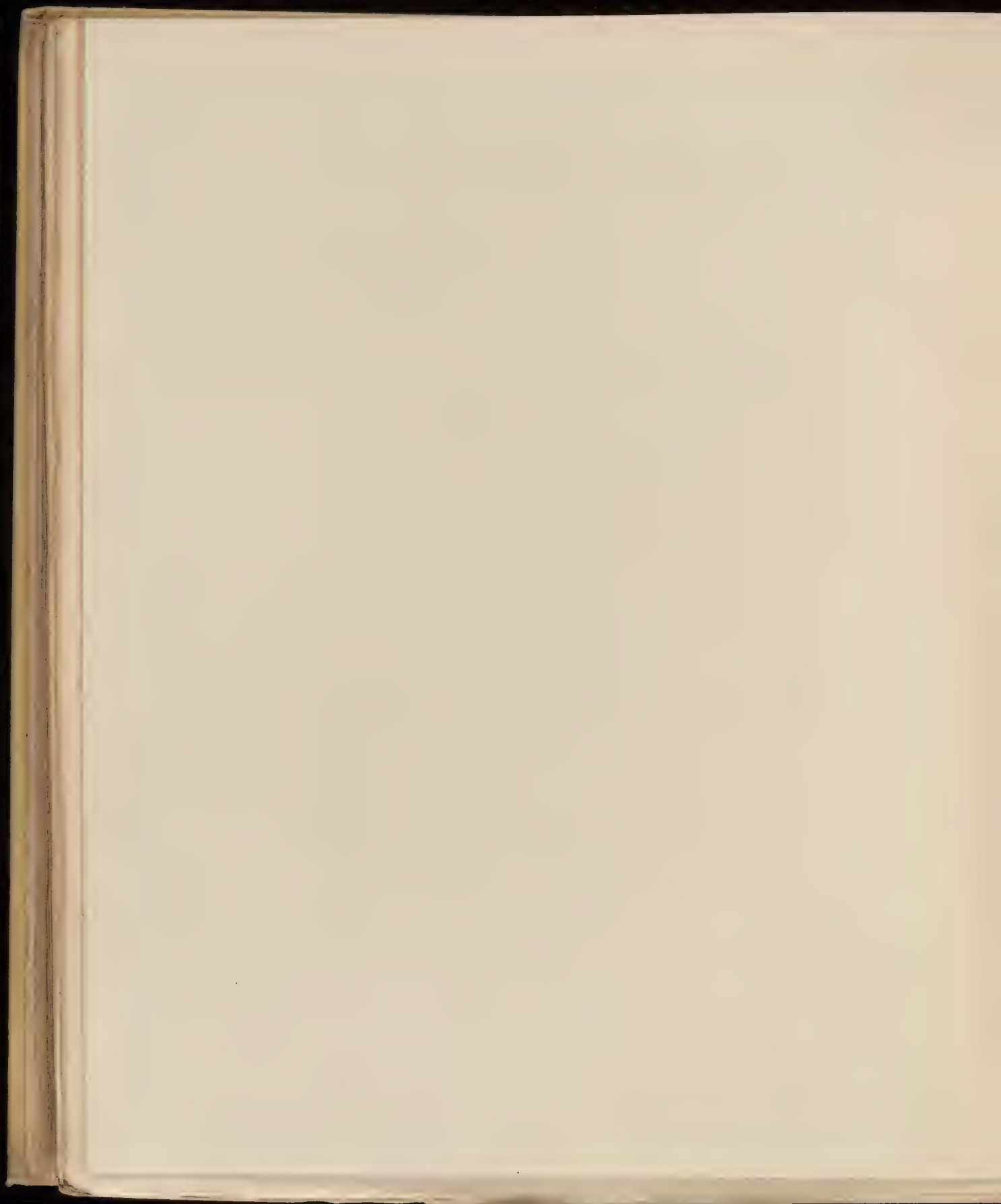
"I have stated that Hunt rarely used body-colour, even in minute quantities, in his figure-work. He used the knife! No surgeon, however dexterous, could operate with the knife more effectively than Hunt. Rather than have his background monotonous and flat, he would scarp up portions here and there, and drop colours into the spaces like mosaic work. He would, in fact, reproduce as far as he could the infinity of nature, even in the backgrounds. Sometimes, when he wanted a foil for the tender modelling of the faces, he would plough up the paper with the knife in some bold parts of the garments, and this by comparison, or contrast, made the flesh look soft and life-like.

"The late Mr. George James, of Trafalgar Square, possessed Hunt's celebrated drawing, 'Too Hot.' It represents an urchin cautiously partaking of some scalding porridge, while a dog watches the operation. This animal, in the immediate foreground, is wholly cut out with the knife, and then painted with a peculiar rough texture, which actually seems to give animation to the creature. The other parts are as rich in colour and tone as Hunt himself could make them, but this terrific knifing has tempered and mellowed them into a glow of chiaroscuro. Other high-water-mark examples of Hunt's subjects are 'Good Night' and 'Devotion'; and of his living animal painting, one may be seen at Stirling, in Scotland, at the Smith Institute. This drawing represents a brindled cow in a byre with a cowboy and milk-pails. 'No Dutchman need apply' when such work is about! The animal is a wondrous study of truth in colour and character of colour, and the interior could only have been produced by Hunt, for it is the most extraordinary study of high lights, low lights, reflected lights, and silver lights in the world.

"Like all true work, Hunt's is for the enjoyment and instruction of the few, who may ultimately leaven the masses with the name of the painter, and perhaps only the name, for to the



*The Blessing.*





## James Orrock

multitude a chromo would be as good as an original. In one particular the most unreserved praise must be ascribed to Hunt. He was a healthy painter. There was not a thread of morbidity about him. He had, it is said, no imagination. Thank God for it! To him the high idealisms were unreal; whereas the gifts of the Almighty, such as he knew, were real, and therefore to Hunt true. Imagination so-called has little to do with such master-pieces in Art as his. Hunt, after all, only wrought as poets and great painters have done, and produced artistic gems from suggestions in Nature and Art. Turner accomplished no more. He made dreamy pictures which the public call poetic, and full of feeling, because they are mysterious and undefined; whereas the poetry abides in the subtle chords and fugues of colour and artistic compositions which were suggested by nature and moulded in the Turner mind. They do not see at all what Turner did; for only a close observer can see; *they* look at them from a distance only. The masses want a *name* from the leaveners, and after that a history. Hunt readers need no history. They judge the work with the rapidity of lightning, and with unerring instinct. The connoisseur or true judge alone places the painter on his pedestal. Hunt's deficiency of imagination kept him from straying from work, which he found in Nature, and he cheerfully left to the higher minds the things unseen and unknown. Hunt had the true ring of the metal, and that metal was gold. In the preface to the catalogue of the loan collection of Hunt and Prout drawings which were exhibited some years ago at The Fine Art Society, in Bond Street, Mr. Ruskin says, 'There is one further point, and if my preface has hitherto been too garrulous, it must be grave in notice of this at the close, in which Turner, Bewick, Hunt, and Prout all four agree—that they can draw the poor, but not the rich. They acknowledge with affection, whether as the principal or accessory subjects for their art, 'The British farmer,' the British soldier and sailor, the British market-woman and the British workman. They agree unanimously in ignoring the British

## James Orrock

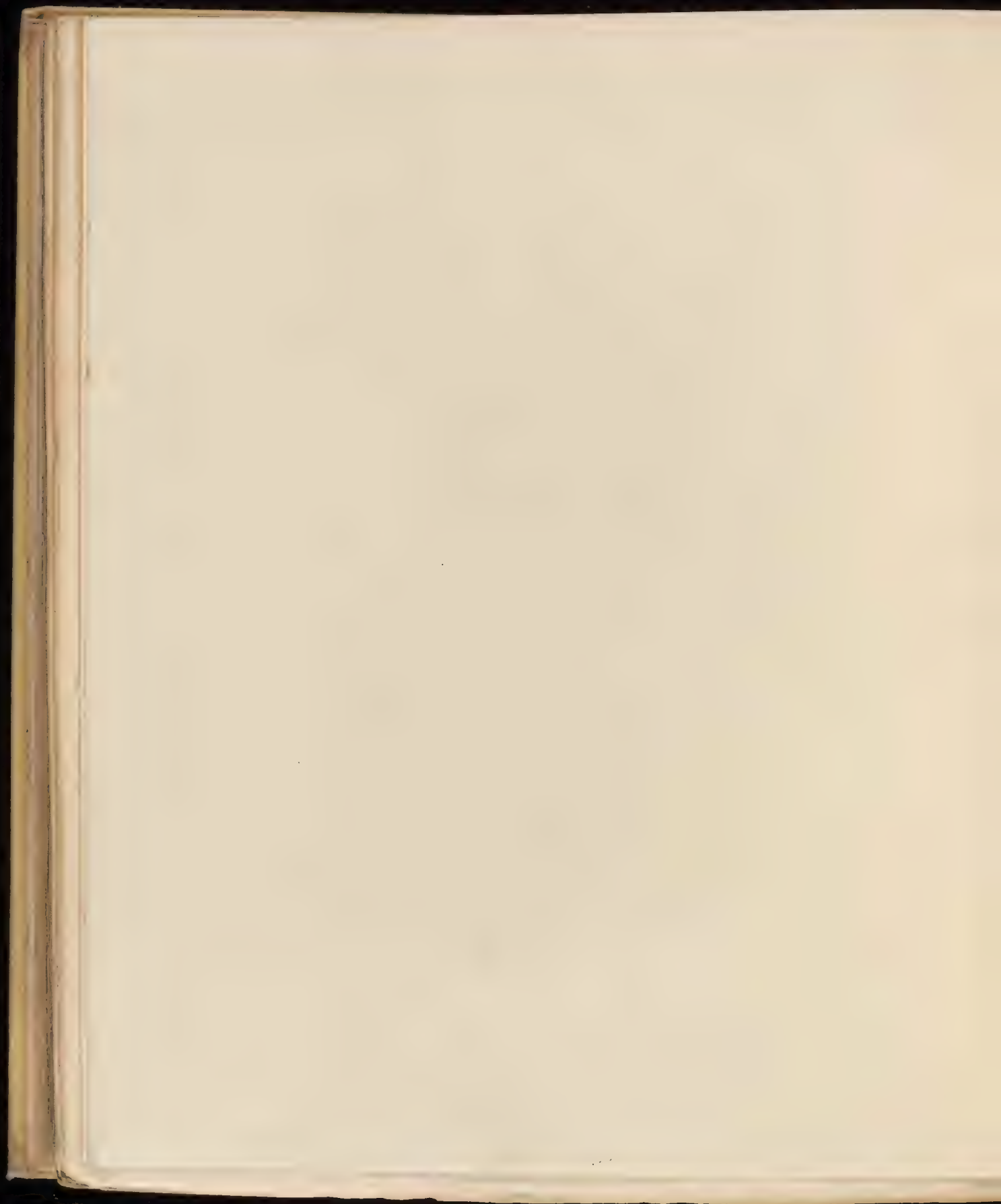
gentleman. Let the British gentleman lay it to heart, and ask himself why.'

"In these enlightened days we hear much of schools public and private, we behold troops of ladies full of enthusiasm being posed and placed by teachers to make sketches in oil and water-colours of bits and bobs of picturesque England. But, notwithstanding 'a' their colleges and schools,' as Burns has it in 'The Twa Dogs,' are the present teachers more able than those of the old times, when the masters of our great school of water-colours *themselves* taught and painted in the presence of their pupils, and gave them at the same time a deeply learned yet plain lecture on the processes of interpreting nature by the means at hand? Have Old Crome and David Cox and De Wint and John Varley been superseded? Possibly. But with what results? The taste of the people is, as a rule, greatly lowered, and to supply that taste, exhibitions, bazaars, and dwellings are filled with abortions in Art. Has not the sense of form and especially of colour well-nigh disappeared, and terra-cotta, with its bilious livery attendants, taken its place? Have we not, for instance, with all our civilisation, destroyed the great and ancient art of the East, and bribed the manufacturing Orient to produce shoddy imitations of an art which was once the wonder of the world? Science and commercial enterprise, or lust for gain has done its work, and a modern Japanese or Chinese vase will go well with shoddy and shaggy carpets, and German prints and oleography. Those who *know*, however, will have the true things after all, no matter how loud the costers' call; and the Turners and De Wints and Hunts will be of the number of those things that are true.

"It is the fashion among ultras to talk of 'oils' as the only medium for lofty expression. It may, perhaps, be so; but let it be known that no 'oils' can breathe in the presence of fine water-colours, certainly not in landscape, and in Hunt's subjects. The Dutchman disappears in such a presence, for here we have power, delicacy, brilliancy, modelling, and drawing such as oil cannot



Old Oaks.





## James Orrock

produce. The clogging mediums and varnishes make comparison impossible. Hunt himself could do nothing with oils against the purity and brilliancy of water-colours. Mr. Ruskin is one of the few whose knowledge of nature and art justifies his great praise of William Hunt. Harken to what he says about the three celebrated Hunt drawings, 'The Shy Sitter,' 'The Fisherman's Boy,' and 'The Blessing,' things which the old painter was himself unspeakably blessed in having power to do:—"The strength of all lovely human life is in them; and England herself lives only at this hour insomuch as from all that is sunk in the luxury, sick in the penury, and polluted in the sin of her great cities, Heaven has yet hidden for her, old men and children such as these, by their fifties in her fields and on her shores, and has fed them with bread and water."

The foregoing glowing appreciation, in the shape of a fitly illustrated essay on William Hunt by Mr. Orrock, comprehended the matured views of the writer, formed and strengthened after many years' constant association with a number of selected examples of the very best of the painter's work. It was exceedingly gratifying to the author to find Mr. Ruskin amongst the most warmly admiring of his readers. "Your very kind note," wrote Mrs. Severn, "and the *Art Journal* with the delightful article on old William Hunt, only reached the Professor to-day, and he desires me at once to send you his very kindest regards and best thanks for giving him so much pleasure. He has read your article with deep interest, I am to tell you." The matter mentioned at the beginning of the following characteristic letter from Mr. Ruskin to Mr. Orrock will be more suitably discussed in another part of these pages, but no place could be better adapted than a chapter on William Hunt for such a declaration on the subject of the English Water-Colour Art from such a high authority. Moreover, there are references to "old William" himself in Mr. Ruskin's animated deliverance which belong properly to the present portion of this work.

## James Orrock

"BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1889.

"DEAR MR. ORROCK,—I am only too thankful to hear what Arthur Severn has told me about the dinner and your speech; and to have your letter and the hope of something being at last done to show England what pure and bright air, and wells of water, and fountains of the great deep of the human heart she had once, in the days when Fielding painted her downs without camps on them, and old William, her fruit on its branches, and birds' nests in the hedges instead of in glass cases, and Barret brought Italy's sun to England instead of sending English smoke to Italy—and when one at least could see the sun when *he* saw us, and didn't dry up our drink of the brook in the way—and when there used to be water-*falls* and water-*colours*, and not pumps of mud and ink—and Professor Church had not proved that all paper had ten per cent. of damp in it, and painters sometimes tattooed such a lambkin before they made vellum of him—

'And the world went well for people who think  
It needn't always be coloured pink,  
While the hills and squills, in delicate hue,  
Were precisely of Oxford and Cambridge blue.'

And one sometimes liked a little lemon yellow and lily-orange.

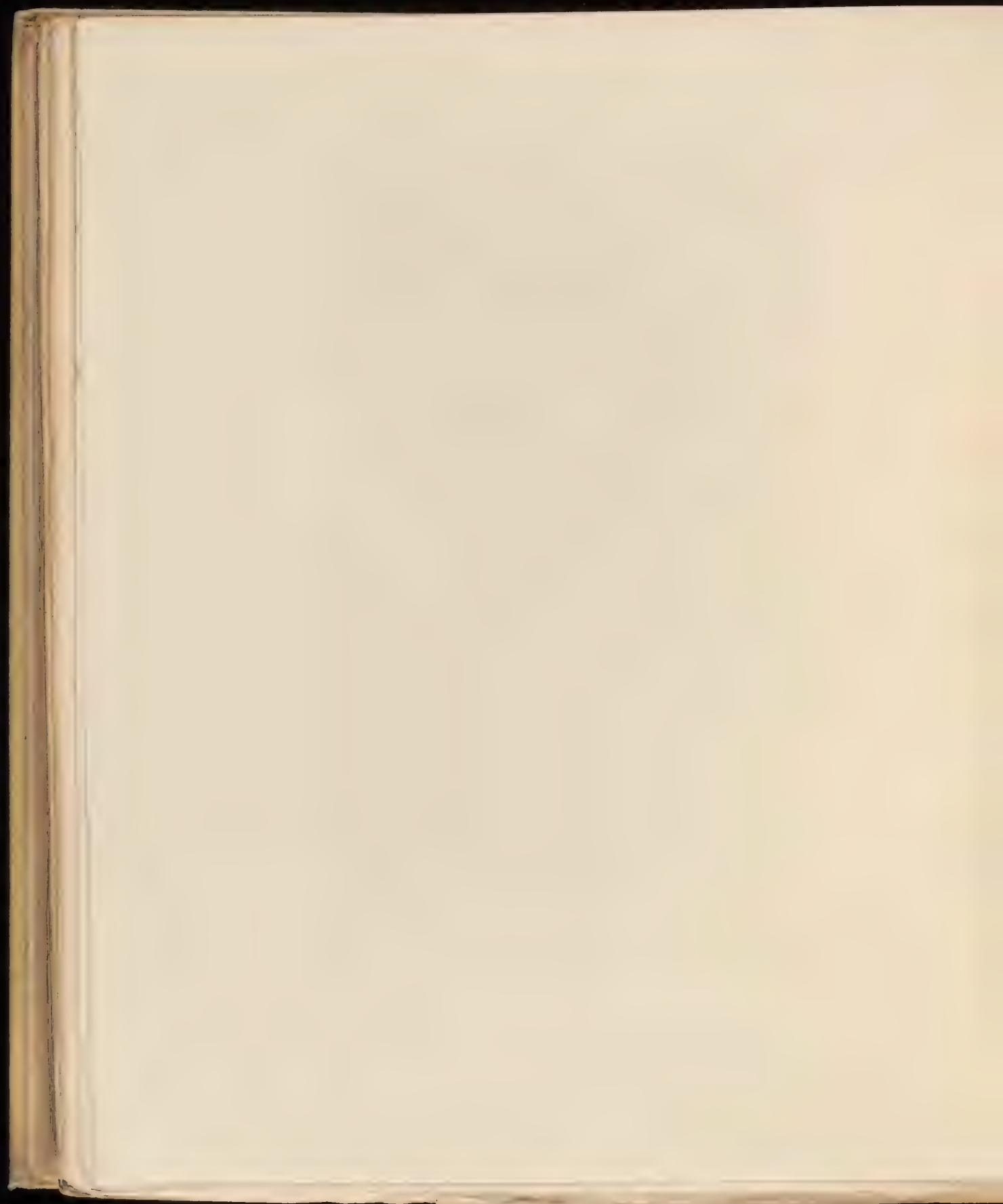
"I can't say any more to-day, but if only I could see a bit of vermilion dawn again, and world's sunshine, before the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I should like it a lot better than afterwards.—Ever affectionately yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN."

"JAMES ORROCK, Esq.

"I had like to have written 'James Hunt' because of the beauty of those green plums, and I have the green bowl you gave me on Brantwood chimney-piece."



*Good Night.*





## *James Orrock*

We might follow the fancy of Mr. Jenkins, who is quoted by Mr. Roget, until it flowered into a more striking picture of Hunt's childhood than that which he has imagined. But the known facts, scant as they are, are singular and pathetic enough. William Henry Hunt, the son of John and Judith Hunt, was born at 8 Old Belton Street (now Endell Street), Long Acre, on the 28th of March 1790. John Hunt, the father, was a tinman by trade. The child was weakly, a cripple, and of dwarfish proportions. Inasmuch as one of his biographers speaks of his emancipation from the workshop of his father, we are left to infer that the boy helped in the tinsmith business before he served his seven years' apprenticeship under John Varley, the drawing master also of John Linnell, who became his life-long friend. His uncle, a butcher in a village near Strathfieldsaye, informed some ladies who had taken shelter from the rain (in 1853 or 1854) that the drawings on the walls which they took to be copies of works by the then well-known artist, were by his "nevy, little Billy Hunt. He was always a poor cripple, and he was fit for nothing, so they made him an artist." Linnell and he painted an illumination transparency in 1807, and he was engaged by the superintendent of the decorations of Drury Lane Theatre, then being rebuilt after the fire of 1809, to assist. He worked on the temple of Apollo that was depicted on a drop scene.

Mr. Orrock has mentioned the surprise he felt, when he was shown some folios of Linnell's landscapes at Redhill, "at their marvellous resemblance to William Hunt's," and has given Mr. William Linnell's explanation of the likeness. In an account of the life of John Linnell we obtain some interesting glimpses of the student days of the subject of this chapter. Very often Hunt and Linnell went to draw for a couple of hours at a time at the academy in Adelphi Terrace conducted by Dr. John Munro, the well-known specialist in mental maladies, who, in that capacity, attended George III. The Doctor's school of art was conducted on the novel principle of the master paying his pupils. The

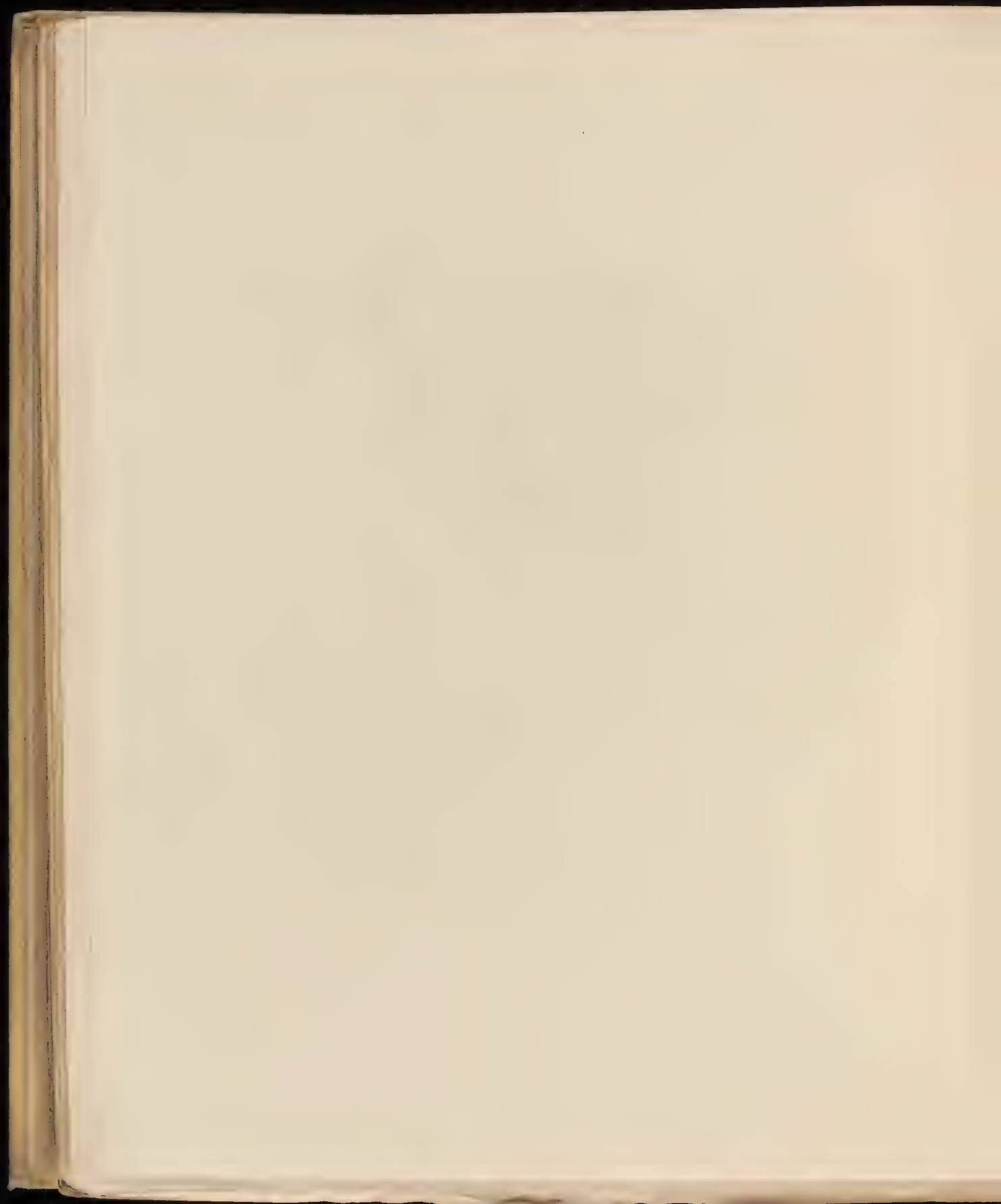
## James Orrock

customary fee was half-a-crown for an evening's work; but Hunt and Linnell were paid at the higher rate of eighteenpence an hour. The doctor had a large collection of drawings by Girtin and Turner, both of whom had been his "pupils," and had made for him sketches from nature under his personal guidance. From their drawings, as well as from charcoal studies by Gainsborough and Constable, Linnell and Hunt were set to make copies. Hunt was taken by Dr. Munro to his several country houses (private asylums) near London, and according to tradition the artist, whose constitution continued delicate, was on those sketching tours conveyed from place to place in a tiny donkey-cart or chaise that was protected from the weather by a spacious umbrella. These excursions were mainly in the neighbourhood of Bushey and Watford. An anecdote is related of Hunt which may be repeated. One evening, after leaving the schools of the Royal Academy at Somerset House, Mulready, Linnell, and Hunt wandered along the Strand to inspect certain illuminations that were ablaze in celebration of some great victory. Finding it impossible to extricate themselves from the pressure of the multitude, Mulready and Linnell persuaded Hunt to simulate death, and thereupon, hoisting the apparently lifeless body upon their shoulders, an appeal was made to the crowd to open a passage for the corpse. The agonising request was complied with, and the three fellow-students got safely and comfortably out of the crush.

Linnell lived until 1882; William Henry Hunt died in 1864. The year preceding his death Hunt renewed the intimacy of their youth, which had been interrupted by their divergent paths in life and art, and fortunately some interesting records of the restoration have been preserved. From the source already drawn upon we learn that in 1858 Wethered the dealer had taken Hunt a quince which Linnell had plucked for him. The fruit Hunt introduced into one of his still-life drawings which the dealer purchased. Linnell eventually induced Wethered to part with the drawing in exchange for one of his own sketches. We are left to infer that



Lake, Imiti.





## James Orrock

the transaction effected the renewal of the communion of the two painters already mentioned, albeit it was not until some time subsequently that Hunt, addressing his former fellow-student as "Friend Linnell," wrote to the latter, enclosing "*a carte de visite* of myself at a venture, if you care to have the same," and asking for photographs of Linnell and his sons in return. In the same epistle he goes on to say—

"How long ago is it since I met you at the Royal Academy Exhibition? I did not think how different we look to what we did when I had the advantage of sketching with you opposite Milbank. What fine things you would have made in the old town in France, and of the fishermen and boats, if you had gone over the water!

"I hear of you sometimes through Wethered, and I dare say he has told you how lame I am all through falling off some four or five steps. I fear it's quite out of question my ever seeing your beautiful place."

The letter from which the foregoing extracts are made was written from 62 Stanhope Street, Hampstead Road. The following, dated June 18, and written from Bromley, affords a quaint picture of the artist sick for lack of summer weather, and gives a curious if partial disclosure of his religious views. It is addressed to "Friend Wethered," the dealer.

"I am astonished to find you have had any summer weather. As to going on with the drawing of the house and the roses, it is quite out of the question. I could do nothing in my painting-room unless I kept a good fire. There must be some mistake in the order of the seasons. Moore says there will be nice hay-making weather in August; then perhaps I may be able to do something out-doors. Until there is really some warm weather I can only make small drawings. The primrose blossoms, the apple and the may blossoms, are all over. I would try my hand at a cow, but it is too cold even to sit in a cowshed. Still, I am not, nor do I intend to be, idle. I fear that I shall not be

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able to make two drawings for Mr. Gillott until there is some large sort of fruit, such as melons, pines, grapes, &c., which can be done the latter end of the summer when it comes. We have had to-day more or less rain and cold with wind, so much indeed that I could not stay out-doors to hear the Ranters preach about Christ being the only name that can save sinners. But what's the use harping upon it Sunday after Sunday? You would be amused to hear how they harp upon being washed in the blood of Christ. What a very singular destiny!"

In the very last letter Hunt wrote to Linnell there are one or two touches not without their undertone of pathos. One imagines how he would have delighted in Linnell's rural life when he exclaims, "What a beautiful situation your house must be! My country retreat is an old farm-house near Basingstoke, Hants, and that I rent." Then follows an admonition which it were well if admirers of such still-life as he, and he only, painted would bear in mind:

"I still work very hard at grapes and apples; but I wish persons would like the drawings as bits of colour *instead of something nice to eat.*"

During Mr. Orrock's residence in the Midlands he never omitted paying an annual visit to the principal exhibitions of pictures in London, that of the Old Society of Painters in Water-Colours as a matter of course included. It was in the galleries of the Old Society that his allegiance to Hunt was completed; it was there (to use his own emphatic words) "he was made a Hunt man for life." On the one hand those marvellous birds' nests and (it almost seemed) fragrant primrose-banks, the flowers with the velvety look which Hunt and Hunt only could express, and on the other such matchless figure-subjects as "Devotion," completed the capture. It is put thus inasmuch as the charm of Hunt's drawings had begun to operate with his worshipful admirer long before. It is true that when he saw the "Devotion" he felt impelled to declare that it was the finest thing he had ever seen

## James Orrock

as to drawing and modelling, but he had, in the Midlands, on the occasion of many accordantly critical foregatherings with his congenial friend Leighton, and with John Burgess, one of his masters, been educated in and, as it were, saturated with William Hunt. They had "talked" the painter continually, and together analysed and appraised the exquisite nature of his drawings. One conceives that Mr. Ruskin would have delighted in John Burgess, who was not only an intelligent enthusiast on the subject of the master in water-colours whom he himself had perceived and glorified, but was also "a kindred soul" in his love and knowledge of the right Gothic architecture.

The first drawing by William Hunt which Mr. Orrock was enabled to add to his collection was a study of a hedge-sparrow's nest, with the eggs, upon a primrose-bank: a "symphony" in the most delicate blue in nature, and the tenderest yellow. That drawing, purchased upwards of forty years ago, formed the foundation of a large group of separately characteristic examples of William Hunt's pencil, every one a gem, which constitutes a matchless collection of the artist's work in the gatherer's possession to-day.

Mr. Orrock's introduction to the artist himself was remarkable. He had acquired one of the most beautiful of Hunt's recent drawings, a composition of a pine-apple and black Hamburgh grapes. This, in his ignorance (as he now cheerfully confesses), he thought was capable of some improvement. He felt, in fact, that the grey-green sprouting leaves at the top of the pine-apple ought to be broken with variegated colour. He was urged by the dealer from whom he had purchased the drawing, and whose attention he directed to the defect—as he in his callow conceit considered it—to call on the painter and point out the alleged blemish. Accordingly, "greatly daring," yet not without some slight trepidation, Mr. Orrock betook himself to 62 Stanhope Street, and, as he had been led to anticipate, found the painter at home and promptly ready to grant him an audience. Had Mr. Orrock not been



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prepared by what he had naturally regarded as an exaggerated description ("You will find Hunt almost a dwarf") for the apparition which confronted him, he could not have avoided betraying his surprise at meeting a man so extremely small. But "the splendid head" (to quote Mr. Orrock's own words), "the clear, piercing, grey eye that looked straight into you and through you, together with the searching and somewhat plaintive voice were those of an uncommon person, a genius! His manner exhibited an odd blending of nervousness and deliberation. His sentences were lucid and concise. He struck me as being a man who had thought out every word he uttered, and everything he said was to the point." Mr. Orrock duly introduced himself and his business, and at the same time produced the drawing in question. No longer with the same confidence in his judgment, but submissively, he ventured to suggest that the work would be improved if one or two of the sprouting leaves of the pine-apple were represented in a condition of decay. Hunt very quietly answered "No," and thereupon gave his reasons. "That green-grey mass of colour is of great value in the picture. It is, as you observe, in contrastive harmony with the rich body of yellow in the pine-apple itself, and unites this third mass, these deep purple-black Hamburgh grapes, comprising a trio of massed colour in the design. With the principal objects so placed, all other things come in to divide and subdivide without disuniting; this sprinkle of bright red berries excepted. They are put in to express the high or dominant note in the colour composition." Mr. Orrock has not forgotten a word of that little lecture. But that was not all. In his quietly impressive manner, his plaintive voice charged with intenser meaning, he added, "But I could not do that which you suggest, even if I were willing, because I paint everything from nature. Without nature I could not otherwise get character of colour and form, to obtain which is my constant aim."

Before they separated Mr. Orrock said: "Mr. Hunt, I should very much like to possess one of your rustic studies. Will you



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kindly paint me one?" He at once consented, and asked what his commissioner would like. The rejoinder was that which was usual with Mr. Orrock when he gave a commission to a master. "Paint whatever you please, sir; I shall be quite satisfied with what you yourself like." Subsequently the call was repeated. On the occasion of his next visit to London Mr. Orrock went to Stanhope Street again and reminded the artist of the yet unpainted rustic figure. Meantime, Hunt had had several reminders of the business through the post. To these he had replied in notes written upon pink paper. Mr. Orrock thanked the writer on behalf of a lady in Leicester, a collector of autographs, to whom the notes had been presented, and then, of course, inquired about the promised drawing. Hunt's answer was that he was very sorry, but he had been exceedingly busy painting pictures for the dealers, and the subjects were "Bud-nests to please the women!" Mr. Orrock contented himself with a good-natured remonstrance, and said he must possess his soul in patience until such time as the rustic figure was permitted to displace the "*bud*-nests to please the women." On the occasion of the next visit the painter's excuse for the non-fulfilment of his promise was quainter still. (As a matter of fact, Mr. Orrock never did succeed in obtaining a drawing by Hunt direct from the easel.) He said he could not get the promised drawing done in consequence of the jackals! "What do you mean by the jackals?" was the astonished rejoinder. "Why," the artist replied, with the ghost of a chuckle and a twinkle in his eye which hinted at the humorist who painted the "Attack" and the "Defeat," "there is one of them comes and walks up and down in front of the house, and who sits down on the doorstep when he is tired, and he refuses to budge until he gets a drawing." It was to one of William Hunt's pack of pertinacious "jackals" that Mr. Orrock was driven to apply for an example of the master's work. As it chanced, he was fortunate in acquiring the well-known "Mulatto's Head," which forms part of the Hunt group in his present water-colour collection.

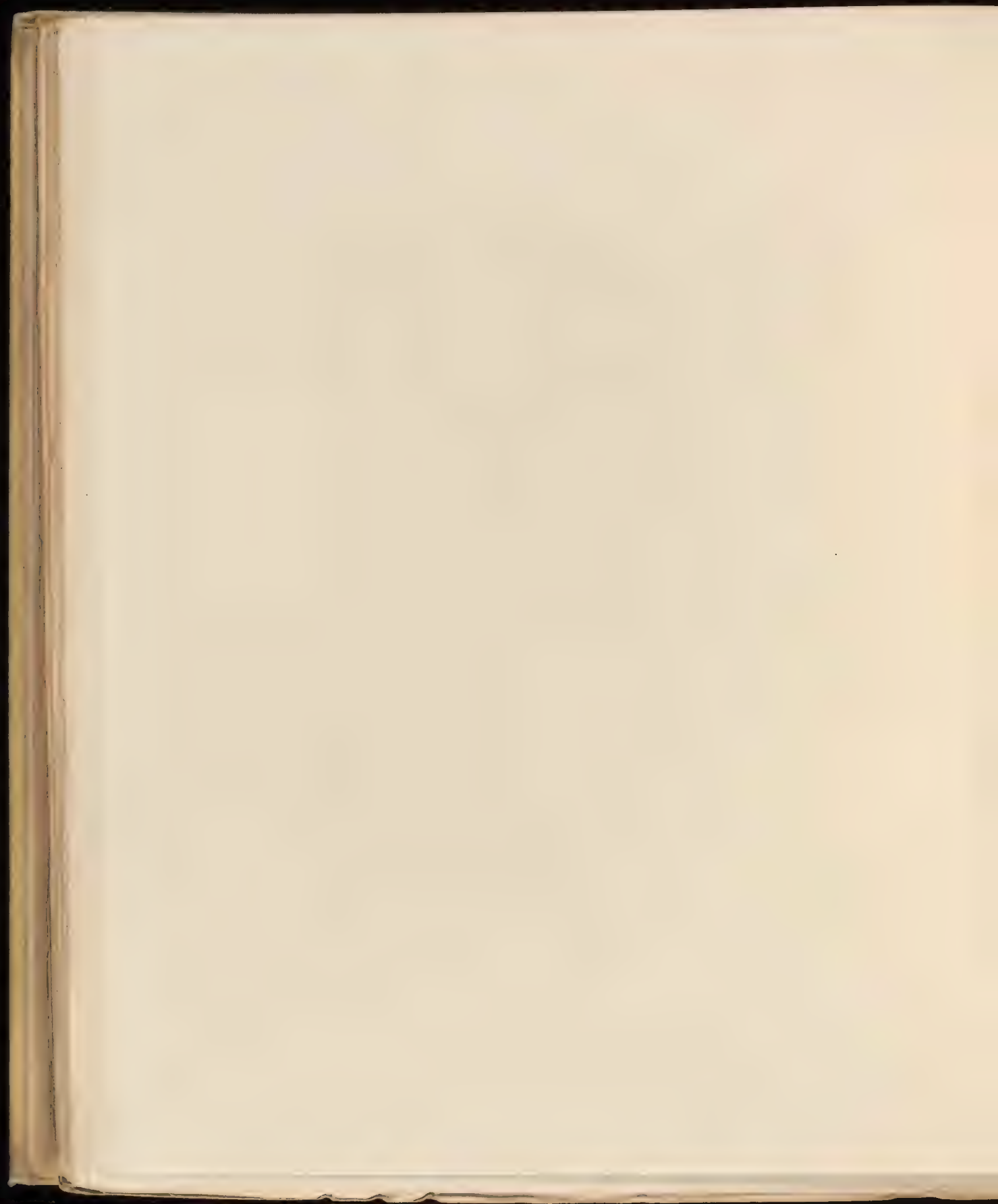
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It was during these interesting and instructive visits to William Hunt that Mr. Orrock was afforded the privilege of witnessing the painter at work in the small, somewhat bare and plainly-furnished room behind that into which he had been originally shown. Not that all, or anything like all, the methods of the master were exhibited for the edification of his admirer. The operation of "the knife," and the painter's separate employment of body-colour, for instance, both peculiar, not to say exclusively personal, to Hunt in their aim and significance, were for the greater part revealed to Mr. Orrock after an exact and painstaking study of the works of the artist extending over a number of years. But Mr. Orrock saw him paint in the little room just mentioned, which commanded a view of a dismal—a regular London back-yard or "garden," about as inappropriate and unsuggestive an environment as could have been imagined for such a realiser in art of pure Nature. The visitor remembers the bunches of grapes and other newly-gathered fruit upon the table, and he also recalls a prepared background of crumpled brown paper upon which had been deposited and roughly built up patches of earth, and over these, in ordered irregularity, a distribution of lichens and mosses. There were also amongst the painter's "properties" handfuls of grass and sprigs of ivy. It invariably occurs to Mr. Orrock, while reviving his brief but refreshing personal intercourse with William Hunt, to relate what the artist said to the late Mrs. Powell of Leicester, who was a pupil of Hunt's and a competent teacher of drawing in that town. When she asked him naïvely what colours she was to put into a drawing of an orange upon which she was engaged, because it seemed to her that those she would have to employ were multifarious, he replied, "You must model and draw the orange, and you can put what colours you like into it, but you must preserve at all times the local colours—*for it must be an orange, and nothing else.*" William Hunt presented Mr. Orrock with his portrait, upon which he had inscribed his autograph.

The experiences of Hunt at Hastings, the mild airs of which



*Brighton Beach.*





## James Orrock

benign seaside resort agreed with his enfeebled frame, have supplied the writer of a biographical sketch with several characteristic anecdotes of the artist. "The human boy," perhaps the cruellest animal in creation, made fun of the odd little genius, without, however, at all rousing his resentment. He repulsed his assailants by "shaking his nose at them," and they fled.

There were interesting traditions of him current in that part of Sussex in the late 'seventies, and it may be that some of them yet survive. Mr. Bernard Evans, R.I., writes: "About twenty-five years ago, when I was sketching at Hastings, one day I happened to be talking to the landlady of a quaint old inn in the old town called 'The Cutter,' when I found to my surprise that she had known old William Hunt, the water-colour painter. He used to lodge with her when she occupied a private house and let apartments. She told me that, going accidentally into the cellar, he found a piece of old tree-trunk covered with blue mould and spots, which he said was beautiful! He removed it carefully into the sitting-room on an old tray, dropped some dead leaves and flowers in front of it, 'and painted the most lovely picture you ever saw from it! He would not have the tray touched, but carried it into the cellar every night himself, and you should have seen the people that came in their carriages just to see the painting of that old tree-trunk!'"

Amongst many remarkable tributes to the genius of William Hunt, there are two of high distinction that claim embodiment here. In 1864, the year of his death, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, writing on the subject of the Water-Colour Society's Second Winter Exhibition of Sketches and Studies,<sup>1</sup> says: "Such an exhibition as this affords the scantiest occasion for that amount of critical specification—in any case very limited—which it falls within our plan to give. The very deplorable loss, however, which English Art has sustained in the death of that sturdy and gentle humorist, poet of literalism,

<sup>1</sup> *The Fine Arts Quarterly Review*.

## James Orrock

and unrivalled prince of still-life painters, Hunt, gives to his contributions, the last which he lived to see upon the walls of any gallery, a sad interest, which may justify us in naming the whole set *seriatim*. They were:—No. 26. Four Landscapes. 95. A frame containing ten subjects. 105. A frame containing nine subjects, mostly shipping. 177. A frame containing nine subjects, including the sketches of "Topsy," and "The Pet of the Village." 197. Six Sketches at Hastings. 203. Sketches of a Turtle, and a Fawn. 290. A study of a Peacock; Mary Queen of Scots' Room at Hardwicke Hall. 312. A frame containing six subjects—two dogs, &c. 333. A frame containing nine sketches in colour. 341. A frame containing five sketches of Boats. 352. Two Landscapes. 359. A View of Hastings, and a Landscape. 364. A frame containing four Studies of Clouds, and one Landscape."

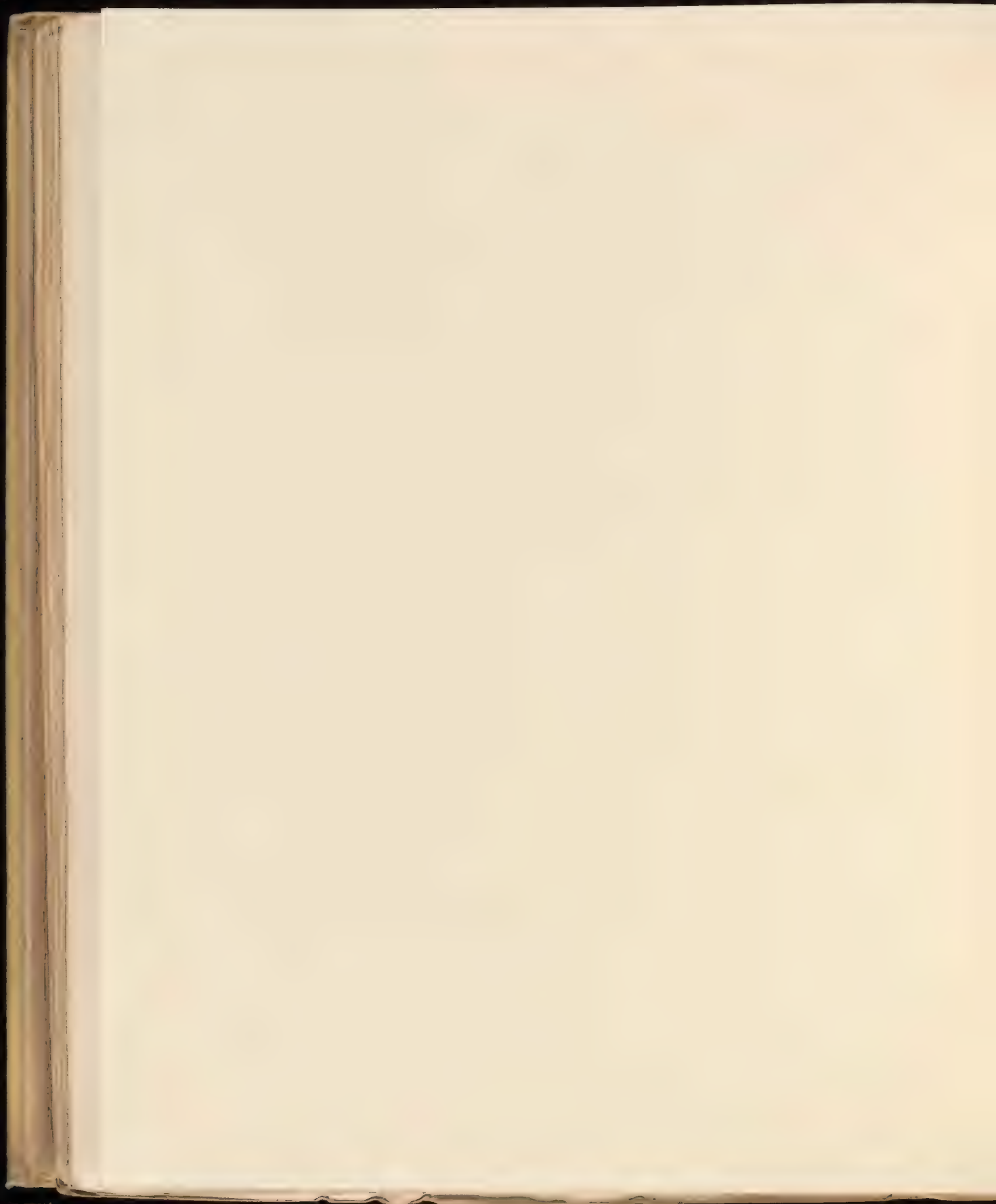
To "Topsy," Mr. Rossetti appends the words "an admirable pencil study." He pronounces the six sketches at Hastings "capital," designates the two dogs, &c. (312) "most excellent," describes the landscapes (352) as "fine studies of cottage scenery," and says of the frame containing four studies of clouds (364) that they are "admirable in association with sea and other material."<sup>1</sup> This testimony to the work of William Hunt, then but recently laid in the earth, is quoted, first, because Mr. Rossetti is a fine critic of poetry-in-painting as well as of the colour and executive skill of the painter; and secondly, because, with the quoted passage from the Exhibition catalogue, it displays the remarkable range of Hunt's sympathy and achievement. Mr. Orrock has dealt with the width and variety of the artist's comprehension in the essay which opens the present chapter. In the very last chapter of William Hunt's gently beautiful and pathetic life, that written by the hand which was soon to vanish, he put forth his own complete vindi-

<sup>1</sup> In another reference to the artist, Mr. Rossetti says: "It is stated that one of his finished still-life studies would occupy him, on an average, from a fortnight to eighteen days. He was an indefatigable worker; a man of quaint and lovable *naïveté* of character, corresponding to his queer knock-kneed yet vivid and acute exterior, half-way towards dwarfishness."



FRONT DRAWING-ROOM

*A Group of Water-Colours by George Barrett*





## James Orrock

cation. Mr. Rossetti's epithets deserve to stand for their insight, with those of Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Orrock's vivid appraisement, made more particularly from the painter's standpoint. The "sturdy and gentle humorist," the "poet of literalism!" and "Studies of Clouds." He wrought as Turner had done, and no painter who works otherwise, no dabster who dashes in haphazard skies, can ever become a master in landscape—as William Hunt, as far as that description of work went, unquestionably proved himself to be.

A sympathetic explorer who went about and made inquiries, and took notes somewhat after the manner of the author of the "Homes and Haunts of the British Poets," might find much interesting material for a book in the Homes and Haunts of the British Painters. The husband of Mary Howitt bewailed the discomforts of what he constantly regarded as a barefooted pilgrimage along a flinty road, and magnified into a sort of righteous nonconformist mission. Without surrounding the abodes of the masters in painting with the sentimental glamour of an imputed shrine, sufficient interest attaches to them to excite a natural desire on the part of lovers of the National Art to make a visit alluring. In the case of homes and haunts that have been effaced or changed beyond easy recognition, even a fruitless search is not without its emotional charm. As to the literary result, well, one feels that in good hands it might prove fortunate. For example, a Londoner like Mr. Ashby-Sterry could not fail of making an entertaining Tiny Travel out of an expedition in search of the tinman's shop in what is now Endell Street, where little Billy Hunt assisted his father in hammering pots and pans. The neighbourhood where Hunt resided for so many years and produced the finest of his works is a remarkable haunt of the professors of the water-colour art. Joshua Cristall, one of the founders of the English school, dwelt at 44 Robert Street, Hampstead Road, opposite St. James's Chapel; Frederick Nash also lived in Robert Street; G. H. Dodgson lived at 18 Mornington Road; the two Brothers Callow resided at

## *James Orrock*

3 Osnaburgh Terrace; and George Chambers lived at 6 Park Village West. In Stanhope Street, No. 43, lived Frederick Mackenzie, another member of the Old Water-Colour Society. The street itself has changed little, if at all, since Hunt's time, but alighting on his house was not so easy a task as it appeared. Thanks to my friend Dr. Fuller, who has been in practice at St. Andrew's Place, Regent's Park, for a great number of years, and to his command of parochial information as a member of the Board of Guardians and Chairman of the St. Pancras Infirmary Committee, every difficulty was removed. Dr. Fuller knew William Hunt, and well remembers his being wheeled about the neighbourhood in a Bath chair. Amongst his recollections of the artist is one to the effect that, according to current gossip, Hunt could never, in his transactions with the dealers, withstand the rustling music of a sheaf of bank-notes. When the bargain which the dealer sought to strike had been thoroughly discussed, the artful merchant would produce the proffered price in brand-new notes, crumple them, and, as it were, "make them speak." Thereupon the coveted drawing promptly changed hands.

According to the Directory for 1863, "William Hunt, artist," lived at "No. 62 Stanhope Street." It was found, however, after a reference extending over some years' records kept at the St. Pancras Vestry Hall, that what was then 62 is now 170. The carriage-drive thither, with Dr. Fuller, was not without its special interest. No. 26 Osnaburgh Street (formerly No. 8) was the residence of James Holland, a master in the English school of water-colours, and one who—like H. G. Hine and Mr. Hook, R.A.—had what may be termed a twofold art history. As a painter of flowers he was almost supreme. Indeed, his right to hold the topmost position for flower-painting in the English water-colour school has never been questioned by anybody but the painter himself. "Take it from me," exclaimed Holland on an occasion when an admirer was praising his early exploits, "there is only one great flower-painter in the world, and that is old Billy Hunt!"



*The White Monk*









*Venice.*

## *James Orrock*

The celebrated drawing of roses, which is in Mr. Orrock's collection of Hunts, was the drawing Holland pointed out in the Old Society's Exhibition as a proof of his statement. When Holland lived in Osnaburgh Street, George Lance occupied a house hard by in Osnaburgh Terrace. Meeting Holland one day, Dr. Fuller said to his patient and friend (as a matter of fact, James Holland made his doctor trustee and executor under his will), "I have just met George Lance." "Have you?" rejoined Holland, whose contempt for Lance's art was deep and wide. What was he doing? Looking for a nice clean piece of pavement to chalk fruit and savoy cabbages on?—for that is his line, if he only knew it."

The good lady at No. 170, which is a stereotyped London house of moderate rental in a London street that was once more suburban than it is now, had heard of William Hunt from the previous tenant. She was agreeably garrulous on the subject, albeit unprovided with any attractive information. He used the parlours when he was at work ("it was only small work, you know, sir") with the folding doors between them, but when he found that he was liable to be disturbed too much by visitors he had a small studio built out into the garden. An inspection of parlours and studio—which is no longer a studio, whatever else it may be—was unfortunately made impossible by the presence of a lodger, but in lieu thereof a back view from the leads outside the staircase window on the front floor level was cheerfully afforded. There was the little outhouse with its slated roof, which was probably a glazed roof in Hunt's time; and there also, right and left, was the back garden view, almost treeless, and not wanting in low dividing walls. An artist had need to carry his feeling for beauty and colour and poetry about with him who remained and wrought self-contained in such an environment. He had to look within for his inspiration: to live on his memories of the freshness and purity and sweetness of delicately coloured nature. Such an artist was William Hunt at 170 Stanhope Street, Hampstead Road.

## CHAPTER XII

The place assigned by Mr. Orrock to William Müller—His equipment and range—His ideal—Müller and Etty—The colour-composition of Müller's landscapes—His swiftness and verve—The influence of the East—Müller's regret at having neglected English scenery—The two methods of painting in oil—Müller's transparent method—His short life and the work crowded into it—His water-colour practice and what it founded—Painted at one sitting—"Left for some fool to finish"—His Arab hand and electric fingers—His curious gift of divided vision—Peculiar mediums—A worshipper at the shrines of the old masters—The neglect he met with—His kindliness and gratitude to an old friend and patron—No representative work by this great English genius in the National Gallery—A reason why suggested by Mr. Orrock's experience—Mr. Branwhite's interesting letter—Barry—"Grand historical art"—"Landscapes, &c."—Barry and Haydon—The British Institution—Clipstone Street and "The Langham"—Prices—Linnell and Müller—Müller and Constable—The testimony of S. C. Hall—Treatment by the Royal Academy—Müller's protest and brave resolve—The Rev. John Eagles and Müller—Closing days—The Müller exhibition at Birmingham—Plutocratic reparation—" 'Tis the old story."

"IN the great English school of landscape painting," writes Mr. Orrock in his appreciation of the painter, one of a series of papers which appeared in the *Art Journal*, "William Müller occupies a place of the highest rank. He was a colourist, a draughtsman, and a grand composer; a master in oil and water-colours, and the prince of sketchers out-of-doors. Like Turner, in early life he practised the use of the point, as well as water-colour painting, and thereby laid the foundation of his grand matured art. No landscape painter, except Turner, had as wide a range as Müller; he was the most versatile of artists, and unfolded for us visions of landscape and seascape, architectural, scriptural, and pastoral subjects, with multitudes of subjects in natural history. He was also a great impressionist figure-painter, and grouped and coloured his Eastern subjects, which he found chiefly in Egypt and Asia Minor, like a Venetian master. Nothing



## James Orrock

came amiss to him, from a Rembrandtesque interior to the dazzling plumage of the kingfisher. Müller founded himself on the old masters, Rembrandt and Ostade being his favourites among the Dutch, and Titian and Tintoret among the Venetians. In his heart, however, the painter of painters for him was Tintoret, and 'The Miracle of St. Mark' his ideal. Müller's position as a colourist of the highest rank was equal to that of Etty in figure-painting, and those two mighty colourists had kindred sympathies in their art. Their schemes of colour were identical; they had the same strong bias for the daylight effects of Nature, as well as for her depth and chiaroscuro, and the like feeling for the unctuous and unscratchy style of work.

"When carefully studied, Müller's pictures will be found to be composed of colours like mosaic, which are made up of masses of *self-coloured* tints wedged among a ground of agates, with here and there, as in the figures and other accessories, rubies, sapphires, topazes, and emeralds; and those grand chords have a setting of pearls and diamonds. The pearl tones of Müller, of course, tested his eye for 'colour,' and these he showered and scattered broadcast, like the sower, all over his work. In the shade-parts also he was peculiar, for into the 'lay-in' of the transparent ground he lumped and curdled islets of still deeper and darker tones, so as to produce the tremble and swell of the lowest notes. These words of mine possibly sound romantic and ideal; nothing, however, can be less romantic and more *real* to those who possess the *seeing* power whose absence Carlyle so much deplored.

"Müller had the swiftness and verve of Franz Hals as well as the colour and brilliancy of William Etty. No cuttlefish obscurity for him! he was healthy and fearless, and went straight for open daylight and the capture of the vivid impression of what he saw in nature. Müller was a poet in his art, yet his ideal had its source in nature. He dreamt not of the plains of heaven, was never a victim to the nightmare visions of hell, or

## James Orrock

of mystic subjects which showed not the proof-sheets of nature, but were 'jangled out of tune and harsh.'

"In his own rich art-eloquence he expressed the grand diapason of his mind, and his inspirations came chiefly from the majesty of Egypt and Greece. There was, however, a vein of melancholy abiding beneath the bounding and joyous spirit of the man, for he tells us 'The Sphinx gave me perhaps the most pleasure; situated at the base of the first pyramid, at sunset it formed one of the grandest compositions I have ever seen; much of the feeling is due to the expression of the face; it is of a smiling melancholy that so beautifully harmonises with the rest of the scene by which it is surrounded.' Again, 'The valley of the Kings, or rather I should term it the tombs of the Kings, pleased me in particular; there is in its sunburnt rocks a spell which bound me to it. All nature seems dead, and the only object that may at times pass might be some vulture winging its way across the valley, making one feel more solitary than before by its temporary presence. Such solitude as this place possesses few know but those who have been exposed to wild scenery, and that should be in the East and in the desert.'

"Müller's taste was less English than that of any of our masters. He loved travel and adventure, and the East was his Mecca. Egypt impressed him profoundly. He could revel in colour at Cairo and meditate among the tombs at Gornou. He tells us that the temple of Memnon moved him most, and on one occasion, during a storm of thunder and lightning, he saw from amid the gloom the immense statues lighted up which were the pillars of the temple; 'they came like the spirits of the desert, were visible for a second, and then vanished.' This description proves the nature of the man: a great imaginative artist. In this regard he stands next to Turner. Had he lived, it is more than probable he would have painted English subjects with the same romantic feeling, for he expresses his regret when, in speaking of England, he says: 'But I know that her



*The Countess of Clare.*





## James Orrock

ungrateful sons neglect her history as they do her scenery; and unfortunately here I must class myself among the foremost, *yet it should not be so.*

"The methods of painting in oil may, broadly speaking, be divided into two; the solid and the transparent methods. Richard Wilson and Turner may be said to represent the former, Constable and Müller the latter. Both systems have their individual charms, but the transparent method is the more fascinating, because it suggests the depth and the inner light of nature; like a water-colour, you can look deep into it, as into a rich agate, and may perceive the colours floating in liquid amber. The transparent method, however, strictly means much solid colouring also, but on a ground rich and transparent which produces chiaroscuro and *glow* in the shade. The solid or mosaic process is equally beautiful, and has the advantage of producing gradation from foreground to distance, but it conveys a sensation of dryness and flatness when compared with the other method. Rembrandt, Cuyp, and Rubens painted for chiaroscuro, and Constable said his first and last aim was to produce that lovely feature of nature.

"Müller's life was cut short at the early age of thirty-three, but for ten years at least before his death he had become a master of marked originality. In early life he had had the advantage of direction by a father who was learned in geology, botany, and natural history, and who held the position of curator to the Bristol Museum. The boy constantly made careful and elaborate drawings of the various objects connected with his father's vocation, and frequently, in return, had profound discourses delivered to him on the objects which he had illustrated. Thus was formed the very solid and concrete foundation upon which Müller raised his temple. No man excelled him in pencil outline; and until this outline, which was rapid, clear, and artistic, was completed, the colour was not added.

"He chiefly worked from nature in water-colours, and fearlessly drew and painted, as a rule, on Harding paper, putting down

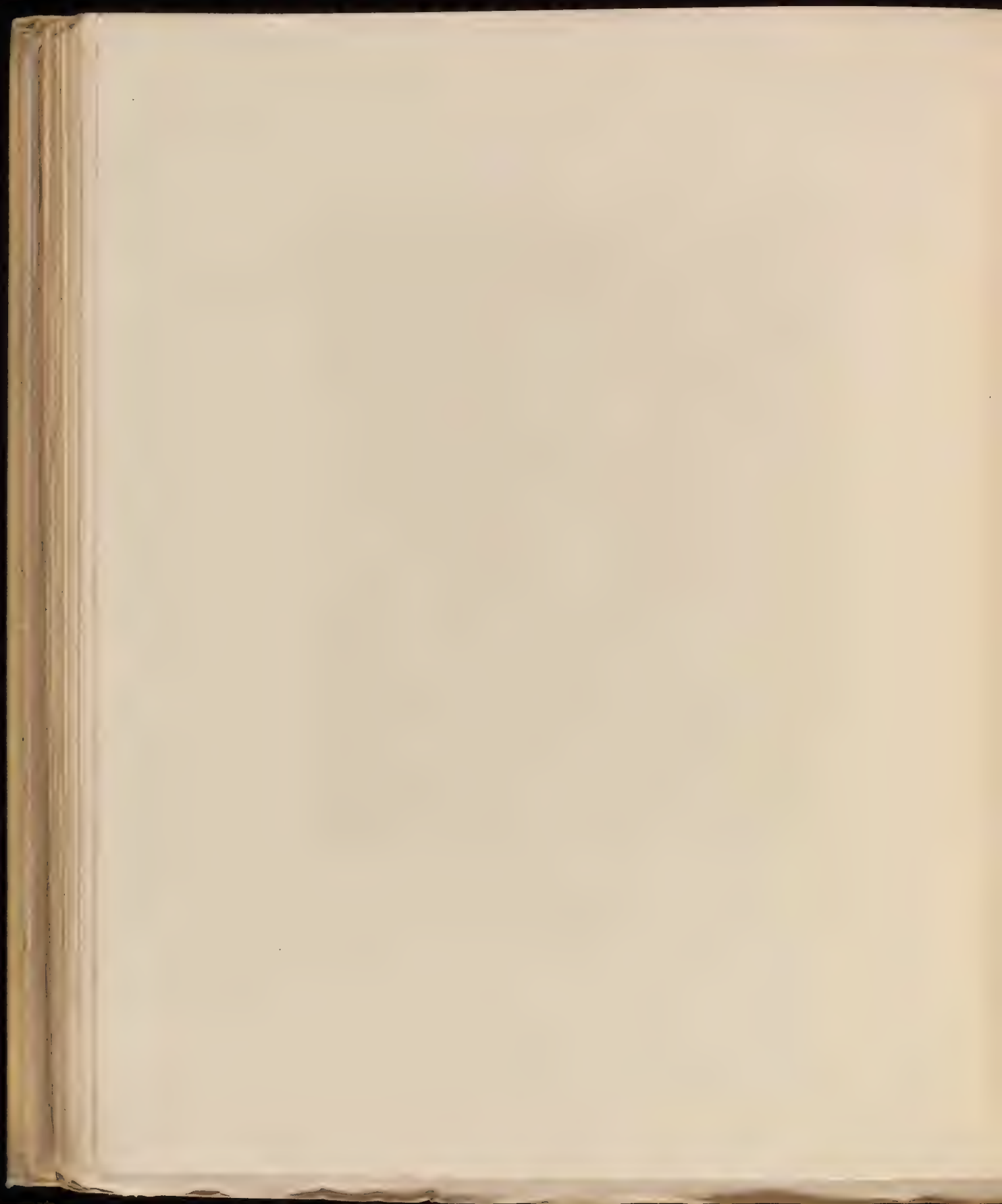
## James Orrock

the colour on his beautiful outline, and leaving the lights sharp and ringing all through the effect. He made no compromise, for he knew the Harding porous paper would not bear rubbing and blanketing. Harding himself, we know, was a magnificent draughtsman with the blacklead, but he touched in with a free hand, in body colours, the lights on his paper. Müller seldom did this, but revelled in the sparkle and 'accident' of the left lights, well knowing that no mechanical touch could exist for a moment in the presence of those living lights. Here water-colours leave oils behind, because in oil-painting the high lights, and, indeed, all lights, are put on like body colour, *not left*, as in water-colours. Even in a master's hands they look lumpy and mechanical, compared with the delicious freshness and swing of the more supple medium. The best painters in oil of landscape have been masters in water-colours. Turner, De Wint, Cox, Bonington, Holland, and Barret may be named as examples. Müller, therefore, brought his water-colour practice to bear upon his work in oil, and his delight was to paint in the latter medium straight through by the 'first intention' and finish by this process as completely as he could. He has been known to begin and finish oil pictures of large size at a sitting.

"Sir William Agnew possesses the celebrated 'Eel Bucks at Goring,'—in dimensions about six feet by three feet six inches,—which magnificent work bears evidence of its having been painted at one sitting. Müller preferred leaving it in its suggestive state to 'meddling and muddling' it, and as a proof of this he wrote with paint on the back of the picture, 'Left for some fool to finish and ruin.—W. M.' That masterly, silvery picture called 'The Dredger,' also of large size, was likewise begun and completed in one day. Had this great genius not died so young, he would have accomplished more than imagination can conceive. Of all our English painters, Müller was the most magical and outpouring. His restless soul was for ever on the move, but the painter's fever consumed his delicate frame, and, as in the case of Bonington, speedily



*General Wolfe.*





## James Orrock

destroyed him. Those two great artists were much alike; both great colourists, draughtsmen, and composers, and both frenzied for work. Their method of painting was the same—sure, swift, and spontaneous. Müller might be called the Handel of his art, and Bonington the Mendelssohn. They both suffered during life from neglect and even abuse, and both died young. Müller, however, before his death, was singled out for praise by Turner, Etty, Cox, and all the very best judges of Fine Art.

“The most marked tribute to his genius, however, was paid by David Cox, who, although a veteran in water-colours, was impelled to ask the boy painter to give him a lesson in oil-painting. This Müller cheerfully did, and the late Mr. William Hall, of Birmingham, Cox’s friend and biographer, thus describes the event:—‘On Cox’s first visit, Müller began a picture before him, and painted with such rapidity that Cox was astonished; for the picture, a large one, was carried a long way towards completion when the new pupil took his leave. On the following day, when Cox called for a second lesson, great was his astonishment on finding that Müller had in the interval obliterated a great portion of his previous day’s work, and had made considerable progress with another subject on the same canvas. In answer to Cox’s look of surprise, Müller said, “I did not like the subject I worked at yesterday, and have rubbed most of it out; this I think is better.”’ He had commenced his grand picture called the ‘Baggage Waggon,’ which was exhibited some years after in the International Exhibition, and subsequently in the Jubilee Exhibition at Manchester. This picture was to Cox’s mind well advanced towards completion with the single day’s work. Such was the only lesson in oil-painting that Cox ever had; for, indeed, he only wanted to see the *process* of working in oil, he being a supreme master already in the other medium. After this lesson Cox became as great in oil as the boy-master himself.

“Many of the water-colour sketches were done in two hours and never touched again. In consequence of his father’s teaching

## James Orrock

he had considerable knowledge of botany, geology, and even of anatomy. This training shows itself in Müller's tree-drawing and in his delineation of all kinds of foreground vegetation; while his early point-drawing enabled him also to depict in the most condensed form the general character of buildings, boats, figures, and skies, with the details of which he was familiar.

"Müller was *par excellence* an impressionist painter, and no man was more rapid in the selection of subjects from nature. He often said nature is the finest composer, but you must be able to *see* her compositions. You must select them with the 'seeing eye,' and afterwards treat them with the artist's eye. He gave those subjects his grand impressionist treatment and left the slavish imitation of details to other minds; he had the advantage, however, of seeing both breadth and detail, whereas artisans and mechanics perceive only the ordinary aspects of nature. His mastery of water-colours armed him with a fluency of expression which even Constable never possessed. He was a colourist on a rank with De Wint; but great as Constable and De Wint were, they had not the flowing melody which streamed from the sensitive hand and electric fingers of William Müller. That 'Arab hand' of his, with the long, thin fingers, travelled all over his canvas as Turner's did, and trembled at intervals like the magnetic needle. Nature had bestowed on this mortal some eccentric gifts of mind and body. He was left-handed and short-sighted, and his eyes were not a pair, but of different colours, one grey and the other brown. He sometimes playfully said nature had, however, in this particular, been bountiful to him, because with the grey eye he could see colour and with the brown he could see form. While sketching he used an eye-glass through which he commanded distance, but dropped the glass when he was working.

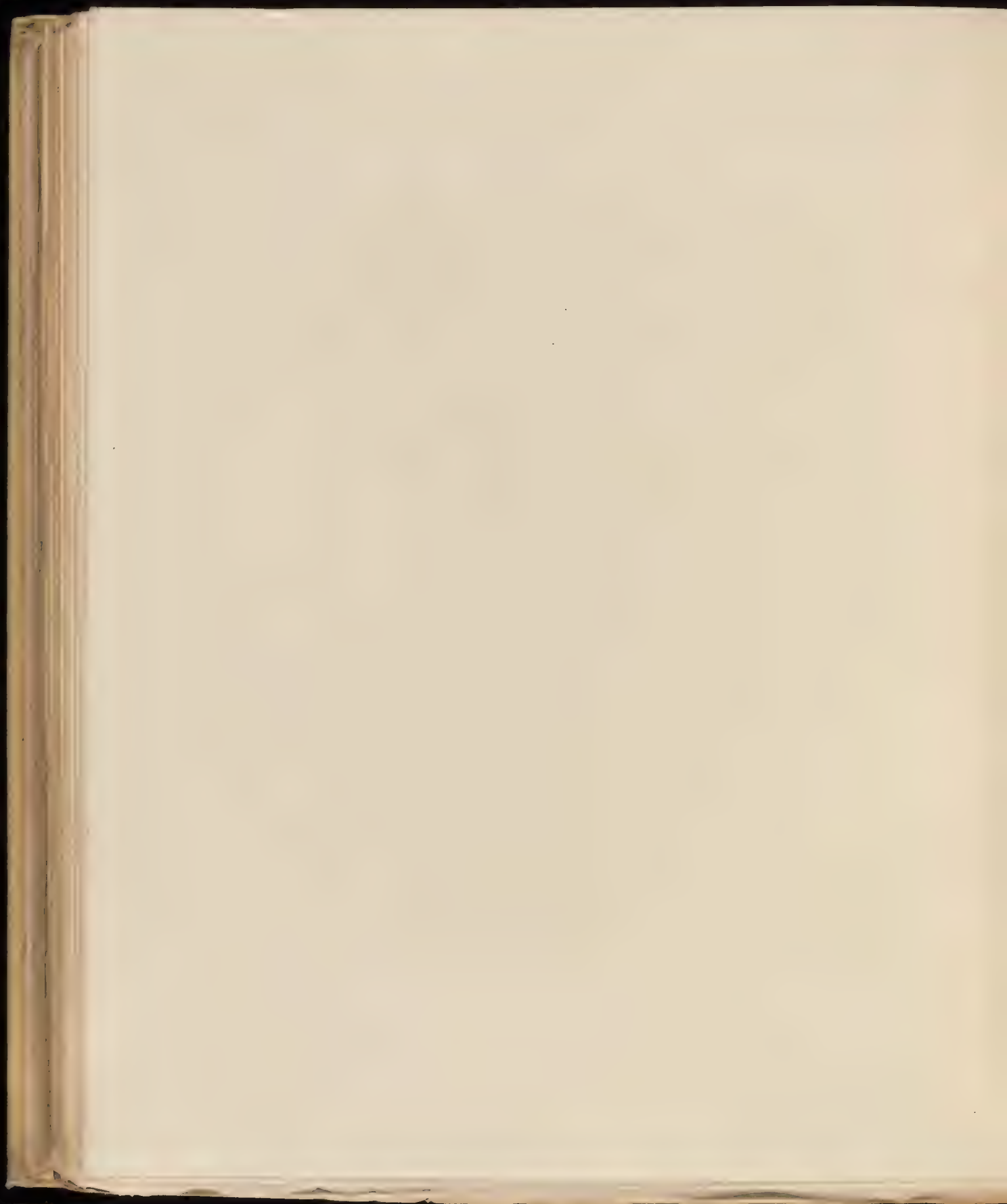
"As a composer he was a giant; he had as grand a conception of masses and light and shade as Turner. His grandeur amounted to squareness of treatment both in masses and touch, whereas Turner's was more undulating and flowing. Müller was an



John & Mary 1840

John & Mary 1840

The Slave & Marked





## James Orrock

indefatigable worker. He was always ready and full of spirit, and never showed signs of fatigue. If he sat up late at night, which practice was by no means infrequent, he was always at his post early in the morning. Mr. William Hall informed the writer that Müller had fancies for peculiar mediums, in oil-painting especially. He sometimes used borax and silica, and chiefly a powder made of ground plaster-of-Paris casts which he mixed with his mediums. His object was to give atmosphere to distance and middle-distance, and to produce that fascinating curd-like appearance by dragging thick paint over the under-work when it was 'tacky.'

"Müller was always pondering over and working out some modes and methods of process-work for the development of his art, with the result that he himself became a striking individuality. He was what is commonly but erroneously called an original man, for of all men Müller was the greatest worshipper at the shrines of the old masters, and was founded on them and nature. It is said that the neglect Müller met with, together with his fever for work, hastened his death; but the fact is, his mind was for ever forcing the locks of its guard-house, and ultimately the frail tenement gave way. It needed the physique of a Titian or a Turner to restrain that restless spirit, and poor Müller had no such physique. His suffering from other causes must also have been intense; for instance, after his return from his French sketching trip in 1840, he asked his friend Dighton to show his portfolio to some dealers, merely to test his place in the London Art market. Dighton came back and regretfully informed him that one dealer only had offered three-and-sixpence each for the lot all round! Several of these sketches have since been sold for 150 and 200 guineas each.

"This great painter was the kindest of men, and was always ready to help any one. His grateful heart revealed itself when his friend and patron, Mr. Acraman, of Bristol, met with a reverse in business. After expressing in touching words his sorrow for his friend's misfortunes, he says, 'For well I remember, to your

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early kindness am I indebted for the position I now hold.' Müller then asks Mr. Acraman to accept a picture, and should he wish to pass it on he will paint him another in its place. He concludes with 'remaining, my dear sir, with a vivid remembrance of "auld lang syne," and warmest hopes for a brighter future, yours, William Müller.' He was as sympathetic in his heart as he was in his art.

"Mr. Charles Hawker, one of the best Birmingham connoisseurs, and there were many such in the Midland capital in those days, was the first to introduce Müller's pictures to the Birmingham buyers. Cox, Hall, Birch, and others speedily confirmed Mr. Hawker's judgment, and gradually influenced the public. Strange as it may appear, the National Gallery does not possess a work of William Müller which may be said to represent his genius. We shall by this neglect have to pay twenty times the amount for a fair example, which only a few years ago could easily have been obtained at a modest price. In spite, however, of the neglect and acute suffering Müller experienced, his name is among the classics as one of our greatest landscape painters."

With the foregoing sentence Mr. Orrock terminates his paper on William Müller. Some little time after its appearance in the journal for which it had been commissioned he received the following interesting letter from Mr. C. Brooke Branwhite, 41 Elliston Road, Redland, Bristol, who, as will be gathered from the contents, was of all men best able to value the loving labour of the appreciative essayist. Had Mr. Orrock struck no other responsive chord than that which rings through Mr. Branwhite's spontaneous tribute, his glowing contribution to a better knowledge of the painter's lofty place in English art had not been made in vain.

"DEAR SIR,—Your able article on William Müller that appeared in the *Art Journal* has only recently come under my notice. Anything in connection with that master is naturally most interesting to me, for though not actually related, I am in a way connected

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with the family, his brother Edmund having married my aunt (Mrs. Rosa Müller), who was my father's (Chas. Branwhite of the Old Water-Colour Society) younger sister. She and her two daughters are the only members of the Müller family remaining, and as they live within a few minutes' walk, I see much of them, and we frequently talk of William Müller's works and ways. Although his sad death occurred before I was born, I have heard so much about him from his brother, my aunt, my father, and uncle (Nathan Branwhite), and many others who were his intimate friends, that I seem to have ever known him.

"In your article you refer to the rapidity with which he worked. My father, who with the Fripps, Johnson, Dyson, Dr. Harrison, and others sketched much with him, used frequently to speak of it as marvellous, and I have heard him say that Müller painted 'The Chess Players,' which was sold some years ago at Gillott's sale for nearly four thousand guineas, in less than three days. My father has often told me that Müller painted nearly all his finest pictures from the poorest, or, perhaps I should say, simplest subjects, for in those he could allow his imagination its greatest freedom.

"Müller was not only left-handed, but could paint and write well with the right; yet he preferred the former.

"His sight was always very short. Strange to say, he was unaware of this defect till quite a young man. When visiting the Royal Academy for the first time with his friend Robert Tucker (also a Bristol artist), the latter lent him his glasses, whereupon Müller went into raptures and exclaimed, 'Now another world is opened to me!' The glass you speak of, that he used for distance, was not an ordinary eye-glass, but somewhat similar to a small toy-telescope, of a very primitive make. After his death, his brother Edmund, who was also very short-sighted, always carried it, and used it for distant objects. I was looking at it but the other day.

"With this I send you four bromide prints that I thought might



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interest you. Two are views of the Goring eel-traps, being reproductions from photos done in the days of paper negatives, and consequently not very long after Müller painted the subject so grandly. They tend to show the material from which he composed so fine a picture.

"The other two are from the bust and portrait in black-and-white (the only likeness ever painted), both the work of my uncle Nathan Branwhite. The bust Mrs. Rosa Müller about two years ago presented to the Dean and Chapter of Bristol Cathedral, where it now rests. The portrait is still in his possession."

If Mr. Orrock had felt in anywise charged with the duty of accounting for the lack of a masterpiece by William Müller in the National Gallery, he might perchance have done so by recalling a circumstance within his own personal experience.

A painter of some repute, a frequent exhibitor in London, who, he said, "had been a conscientious student of Müller's work when he came across it," chanced to acquire a little picture, "which he strongly suspected to be an early work" by that artist. The example in question was shown to Sir Frederick Burton of the National Gallery, who replied to the owner as follows:—

"I assure you I feel quite incompetent to pronounce an opinion on the authorship of the little painting you have forwarded to me. I dare say it may be by Müller, done perhaps in Italy, as the subject seems to indicate.

"I am really not well up in Müller's works, though of course I have seen a good many of his pictures of Oriental scenes, and some of his earlier productions in oil and water-colours, as well as his water-colour sketches made in Asia Minor, when he was with Fellowes [*sic*].

"I should say it would be best for you to take the picture to Mr. Agnew, who, having dealt largely in Müller's works, would probably be able to say whether it is truly by the painter."





*The Rec<sup>d</sup> — Humphries.*



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Before proceeding further in the matter, the owner of the work applied to Mr. M. H. Spielmann, the editor of the *Magazine of Art*, who promptly counselled recourse to Mr. Orrock as the best authority on the subject who was known to him. In due time Mr. Orrock, as requested, gave his opinion, and the incident closed.

There is scant reason to emphasise, much less to labour, the points raised in Sir Frederick Burton's naïve confession. It was no more incumbent upon him to determine the genuineness of the picture submitted to his inspection than it was to admit that he was "really not well up in Müller's works." Yet, while one applauds his good nature and shakes hands with him for his candour, one feels it impossible to part company over the transaction without asking whether a man holding his position—namely, that of the Director of the *English* National Gallery—ought not to have been "well up in Müller's works"? In relation to certain foreign schools of painting, examples of which are notoriously excessive in Trafalgar Square, to the exclusion of ripely representative works of the English School, the judgment and appreciation of the late Director of the National Gallery were for the most part as admirable as they were exact and instructive. But excellent Sir Frederick Burton belonged to the "grand" old order. Sir Thomas Lawrence (as we have been reminded elsewhere in these pages) told Constable he might consider himself fortunate in being made R.A., inasmuch as there were several "historical" painters of promise waiting for admission to the Academic ring. Barry had previously declared a contempt for such art as Constable's, the like belittling of which politer Sir Thomas Lawrence veiled in implication. In his letter to the Duke of Richmond, with reference to "the ornamenting of St. Paul's" (a monstrous idea!) "by the Academy," Barry says, "I had long set my heart upon it as the only means for establishing a solid, manly taste for real art, in place of our contemptible passion for the daubing of inconsequential things, portraits of dogs, *landscapes*, &c.—things which, the mind, the soul of art having no concern in, have

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hitherto served to disgrace us all over Europe." The scornfully sweeping "landscape," with its illimitable tail, is to-day delicious. And yet, no longer than "the day before yesterday," Barry and his opinions were not only taken seriously but his wooden designs lauded to the skies. John Saunders, writing in Charles Knight's "London," in a criticism on Barry which ranks amongst the curiosities of that class of literature, describes the works with which the painter had decorated the rooms of the Society of Arts in the Adelphi as "pictures of surpassing beauty and grandeur, and scarcely less remarkable as a whole for the successful manner in which they have been executed than for the daring originality of their conception." Barry half a century ago and Barry to-day? Well—

"Hans Breitmann gife a barty—  
Where ish dat barty now?  
Where ish de lofely golden cloud  
Dat float on de moundain's brow?"

There have been mighty artists who had to die before they were allowed to live. And, alas! we may be certain they will have successors. Barry's art was dead before it was born. Haydon, albeit a finer painter, with some of the quality of greatness, was one of the Barry order of the school of "grand historical painting." Barry's most prodigious works are entombed in the rooms of the Society of Arts; while upon the walls of a neighbouring restaurant, kept by a foreigner, Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Mettus Curtius* leaps into the Gulf unregarded by an eating, drinking, smoking, and altogether indifferent crowd.

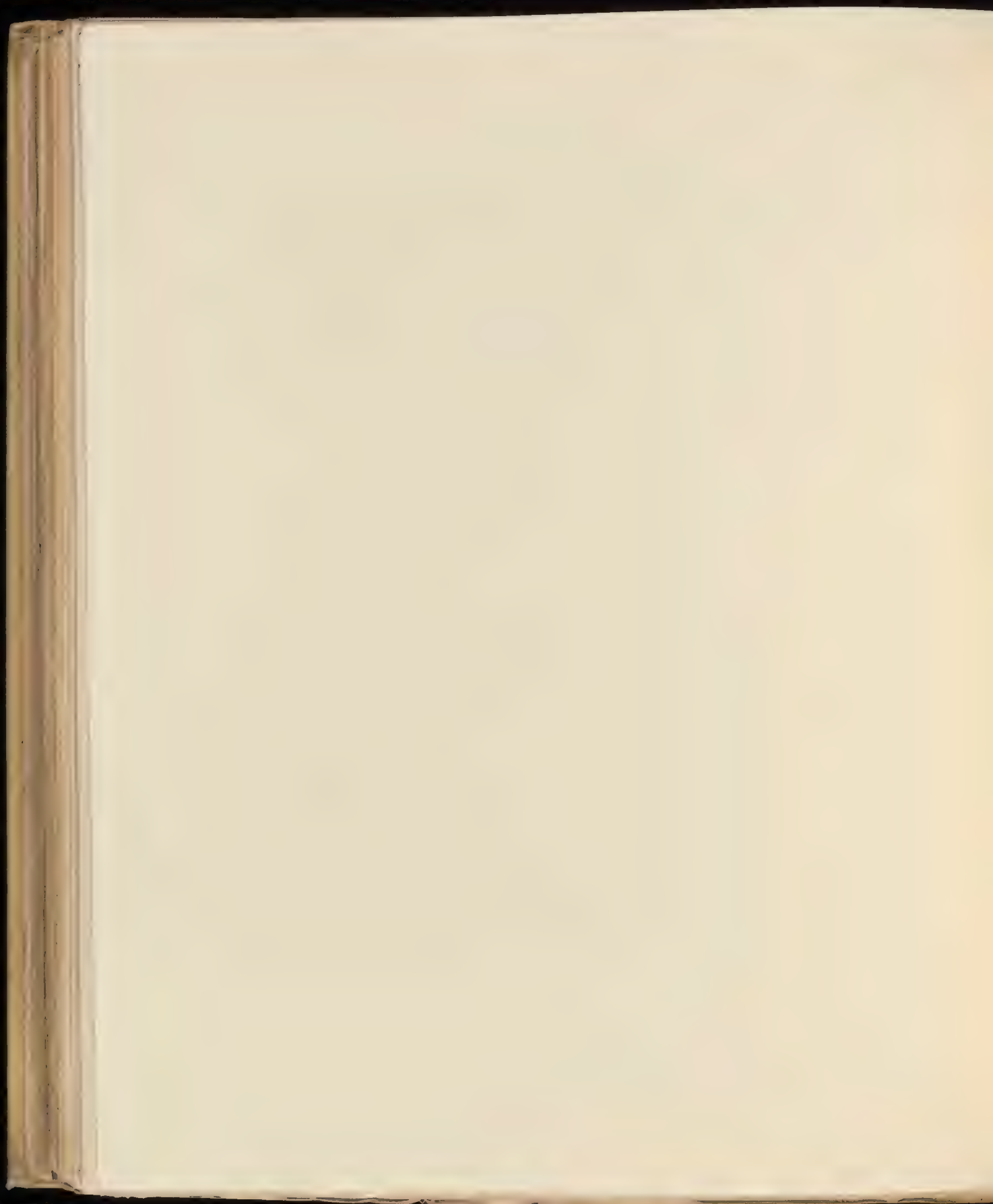
"Landscapes, &c.," Müller painted, and, to quote the words of Barry's enthusiastic critic, his work was "of surpassing beauty and grandeur." In fact, he painted too well for some of his contemporaries who were at times "on the Council" and hangers at the Royal Academy. His "landscapes, &c.," were generally either turned out (David Cox was a kindred sufferer) or hung where





FRONT DRAWING-ROOM

*With a Part or Pergola Suite and Panel of Dressings by William Hunt*



## James Orrock

they could not be seen. His treatment at the hands of the Society of British Artists was little if any better. The famous picture of "The Salmon Trap" was so shabbily dealt with at the British Artists' that the painter for once in a while permitted himself the luxury of an extra grumble. "But," he added, "the very kind compliments I have received from many of the first artists, Collins, Herbert, &c., make great amends. They consider me the worst-used man in the exhibition." There was a much later period in the history of the Society of British Artists, if tolerably well-founded tradition is to be credited, when "Suffolk Street" asserted itself, and maintained its vested rights, such as they were, in a manner that recalls the maltreating of Müller. It is related of a veteran R.B.A., who is now in Abraham's bosom, that when he was asked to consent to the removal of one of his contributions from the line (he had sent the full complement allowed by rule, and they were all large canvases) in order that a remarkably fine work by a new man might take its place, he flatly refused, declaring at the same time, with indignant fervour, that "he considered he had as much personal right to 'the line' as he had to the coat on his back." Paintings whose splendour and power impelled Etty to beg the honour of an introduction to the artist would, of course, have the effect of making the handicraft work of the conventional picture-maker sing small. "Woe," wrote Müller in one of his luminous letters, "to some of the *fancy* pictures of Turks, Greeks, and oddities, which annually adorn the walls of our Academy." Seeing Edmund Kean has been likened to "reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning;" there are passages in Müller's illuminating letters which recall the comparison. He summed up French painting in half-a-dozen pregnant sentences. And what he said about it then would not be altogether inapplicable to much French painting to-day.

Müller was a member of the Life School in Clipstone Street, which had been founded by Mr. J. P. Knight, and held its

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meetings originally in a rough room down a stable-yard in Gray's Inn Lane. With the termination of the lease of the Clipstone Street premises the members made a third remove to rooms built for them in Langham Chambers (which they now occupy). Müller, with his friend Dighton, joined the Clipstone Street brotherhood in 1840. Duncan, Goodall, Poole, Jenkins, Dodgson, Topham, and Charles Baxter were members at the time. It is justly a source of pride to veteran members and past members that "the Langham" has included so many famous painters in the brotherhood. But they have never had a second Müller. In one of his letters written during his perilous travels in Asia, proving both as traveller, observer, and descriptive writer what a splendid special correspondent he would have made, he exclaims, "Oh, Clipstone Street! Oh, ye admirers of rags of costume! How your eyes would have opened to have seen the wonders of that scene, and many, many others in which I have been." Müller resided, while in London, at 22 Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, using the front room of the first floor as a studio. The Society of Arts, which has marked so many residences of great men with memorial tablets, might well add Müller's abode to the interesting list.

Mr. Orrock has mentioned the miserable prices for which Müller slaved, and, concurrently, referred to the present enormously augmented monetary value of his work. The argument, such as it is, is one that admits of no cavil. The following receipts were given by Müller in 1845:—For the "Tomb on the Waters," £44; "Snow Storm, North Wales," £25; "Curgan's Head" (circular picture), £20; "Great Cannon, Rhodes," £14; "Dance Scene at Xanthus" (sketch), £15; "Burial Ground, Smyrna," £50. "The sum tottles of the whole," as Joseph Hume used to say, would scarcely to-day exceed the picture-market value of the least important of the group. "The Salmon Trap," the first exhibition of which has been referred to, was originally purchased by Mr. B. Johnson from Müller for £50; he resold



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it at a small profit, and after a few years he rebought it for £300. Mr. Henry Brindley then became its possessor for £315, and at the sale of that gentleman's collection at Christie and Manson's, 28th of May 1860, it went for £600; not long afterwards it was sold again for £1200. Brought up to date, the evidence of the sale-room would show that no painter of his period has increased in what may be termed monetary esteem more than William Müller. Müller's fame advanced from the moment of his death, at first steadily, and then by leaps and bounds. The year after his demise, Linnell was commissioned by Mr. Thomas, a well-known connoisseur and a new patron of the painter's, to finish one of Müller's works. This was the "View of the Ruins of Pinara, Asia Minor." According to the biographer of that painter, "Linnell completed it from Müller's original water-colour sketch, and received fifty guineas in payment for his work." One wonders what Müller himself had received for the "original water-colour sketch." Probably a fifth of the sum paid to Linnell for its completion, or even less. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Müller had some years before executed a commission to "put to rights," and in that sense restore and finish, several dilapidated pictures by Constable.

It has been well said that the crown of fame is not, for their capricious bestowal, in the hands of the critics. While living, Müller owed little or nothing of the renown which he achieved to them. And after? Well, they have applauded with the multitude. Yet, in reviewing his brief career, it is due to the late S. C. Hall to say that he was one of the first to appreciate, if not to discover, the genius of the great painter. And he was loyal to Müller from first to last. As far as a single pen could, that of Mr. Hall fought in Müller's cause against Academy and Society and against a purblind public, constantly and unwearyingly, albeit with discouraging reward. Writes Mr. Hall, in his "Memoirs," "I have known few artists I regarded with so much affection as I did William Müller. . . . When I first

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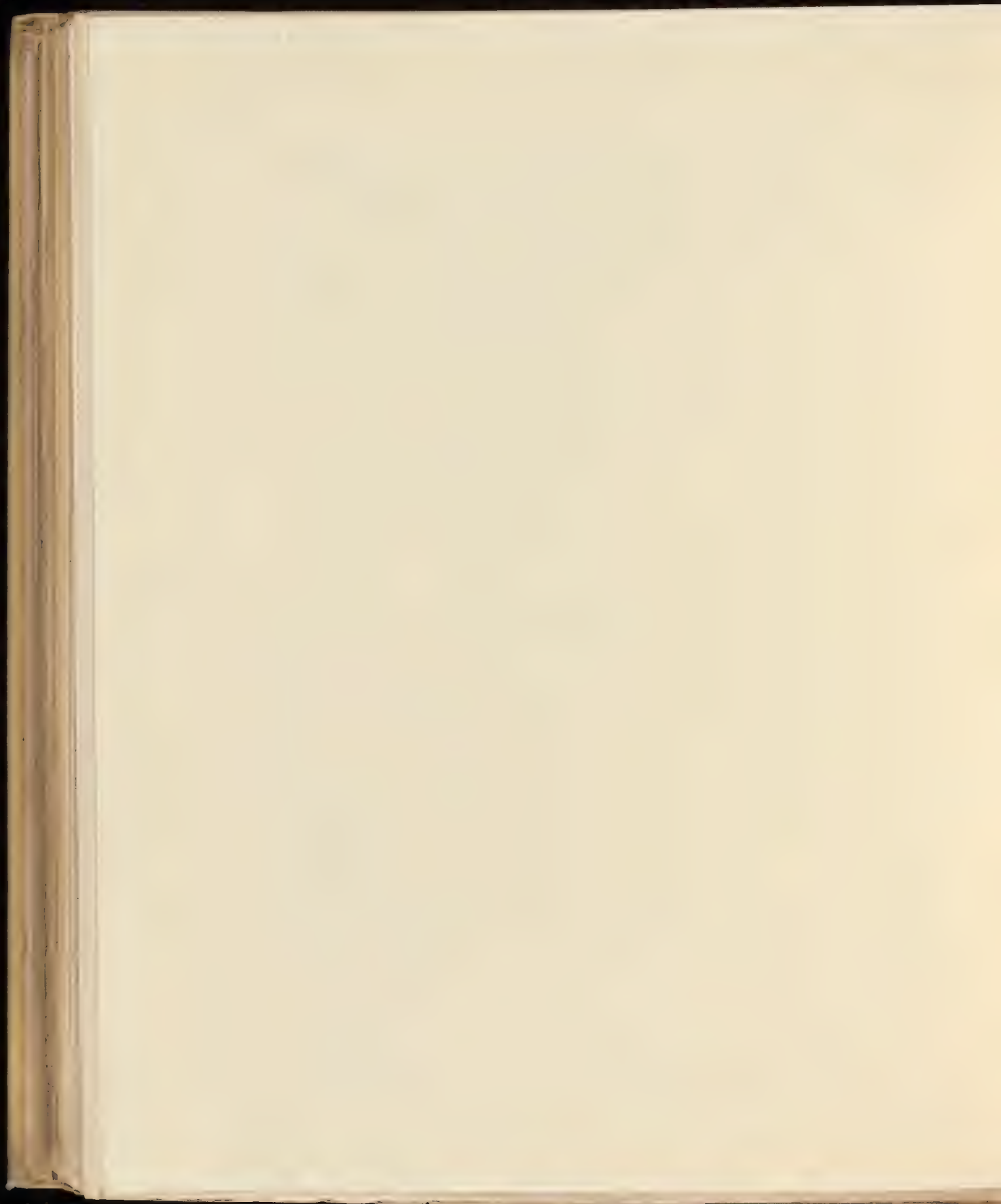
became acquainted with him at Park Place, Bristol, he was a handsome lad, aged about sixteen, singularly modest and unassuming, yet not self-distrustful. I felt then towards him the esteem and regard that augmented as he became a man, and he was one of the most cherished of my friends. . . . In 1845 he sent six pictures to the Royal Academy (he was, of course, a candidate for admission). The six were so placed as to induce a belief that there existed a conspiracy to ruin him; they were either hung close by the ceiling or the floor. Accident might thus have condemned one or two, but it was not attributable to chance that they were *all* marked with the brand. His heart sunk when he saw them on the first Monday in May; he had disease of the heart soon afterwards; and though he wrestled with death until the 8th of September of the year following, on that day he died."

In a letter which Müller wrote to his friend S. C. Hall concerning the treatment he had suffered from at the hands of the hangmen of the Royal Academy, he says, "Despite all that has been done to cast an oblivion on my efforts at the Academy this year, success has attended me; not alone in the sales of the pictures, but by the actual injustice of the situation; more than one of our principal collectors has given me commissions. Among the number is Mr. Vernon (ever the judicious patron and generous friend of talent), and, as one friend writes me, the only thing that surprises him is 'that they were not hung upside down.'" The iron had entered his soul, but his brave spirit was unquelled. If his frail body could have held out, the struggle would, no doubt, have ended in his vanquishing the common foe. He goes on to say, "Such has been the reward I have received for the expenditure of large sums, of great labour, the risk of health, breaking up for a time a connection, the fatigue and exhaustion of a long journey—such are the rewards *a protected body* affords to the young English artist. But now we must take this as a lesson, and have *patience* (I hate this word, but I will have it), and I will pledge my life that, instead of its tending



ADAM FIREPLACE AND MIRROR IN FRONT DRAWING-ROOM







## James Orrock

to do me harm, it shall do me good. I will study to prove to the world that, if *insulted*, I can forgive, but that I cannot forget my love of my profession." Writes Mr. S. C. Hall in his final testimony to William Müller, "I have known few men more perfect. A purer spirit never passed from earth to heaven; his nature was unsullied by a single blot; it was entirely felicitous for good; he left us nothing concerning him to regret but his loss." That an abiding and lovely feeling of gratitude was not absent from Müller's nature is disclosed by his principal biographer in what is said of the young painter and his interesting association with Samuel Carter Hall.

Müller had another discriminative critic and friend in the Rev. John Eagles, a Bristol man, who would have been an artist if the Church had not preferred a paramount claim to the more serious part of his life-service, and the pursuit of literature not occupied so much of his leisure. He was curate of Halberton in Devonshire, and for the last five years of his twelve years' fulfilment of the duties of his office the Rev. Sydney Smith was his rector. It is said of Mr. Eagles that, while "no artist ever loved art more purely and entirely for its own sake, he joined to a theoretical knowledge of all the laws and rules of art, and a familiarity with the best schools, an acquaintance with the materials with which painters work such as few practical artists may be presumed to possess." As to his own efforts with the pencil, "nothing was more admirable in his sketches and paintings than the way in which he managed the minute gradations of light and shade falling on and interpenetrating the foliage of trees, and the exquisite manner in which he preserved, in rock, river, wood, and mountain, the degrees of perspective. All his compositions evinced a freedom, a power, and a complete mastery of the subject, which showed that all their qualities resulted from belief and will, and none from mere accident." A period of over forty years has no doubt made the foregoing appreciation of the Rev. John Eagles's labours in the art world as critic, as well as painter, appear overcharged with praise. He was,

## James Orrock

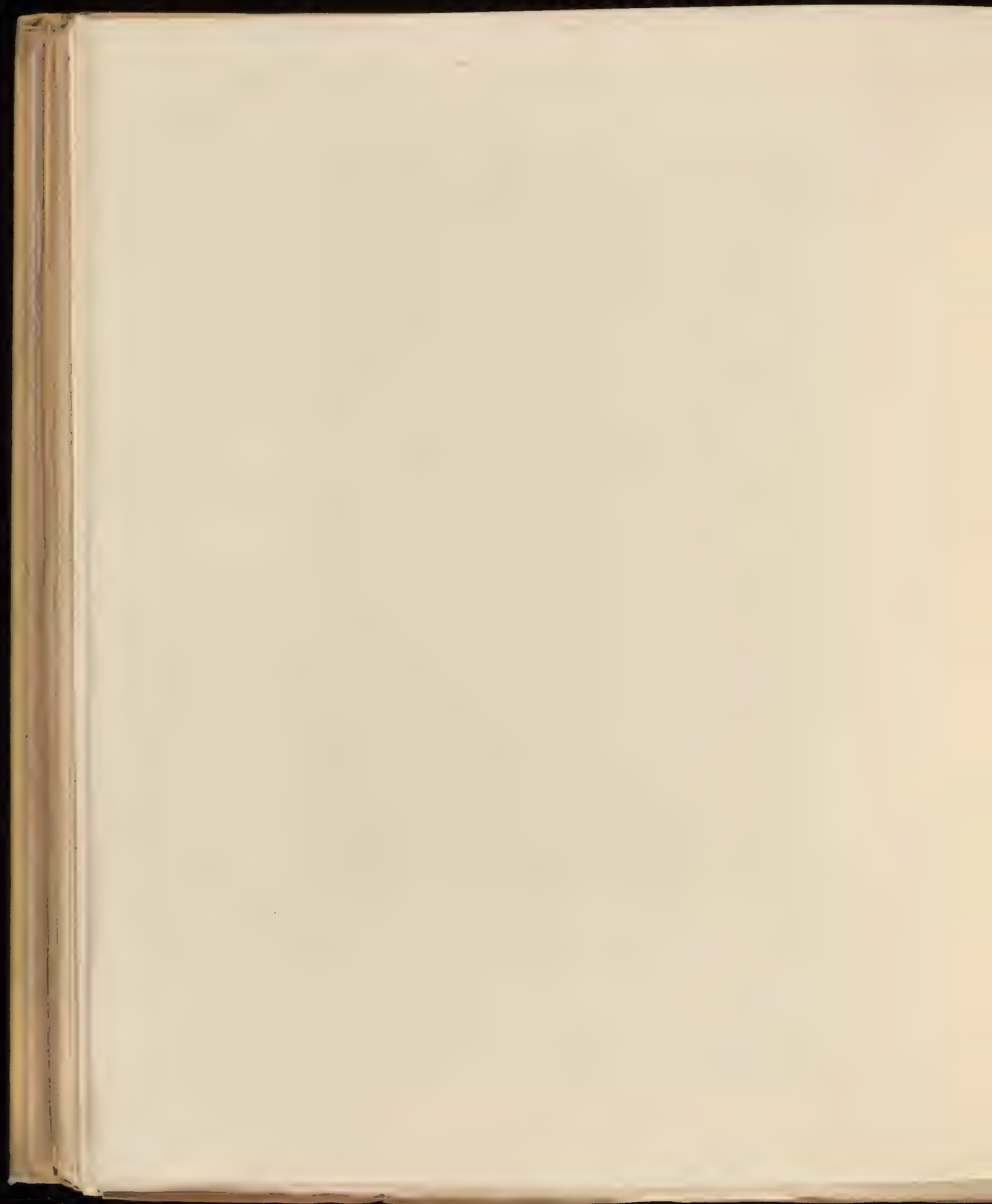
however, a critic of unquestionable insight, and in *Blackwood's Magazine* he addressed an audience unused in Maga to essays on art. As to his painting powers, we may depend upon it that he, whatever his executive skill, had the root of the matter in him, or William Müller would not have been his companion, as he frequently was, on sketching excursions. It is due to Mr. Eagles to say that he discerned the genius of Müller. He writes, in the fifteenth chapter of "The Sketcher," a volume compiled from contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine*, as follows:—

"Mr. Müller of Bristol, a painter whose proficiency, industry, and ready genius must insure him great success, was with me before that beautiful hoar-frost had departed. We loitered about the lanes, which furnished ample scope for observation—every briery brake was a perfect picture. He has since painted a picture of this character of winter, and he selected it as well from admiration of the effects, as because it would afford him the best opportunity of putting to the test a medium, the discovery of a friend of mine, which I spoke of in one of the chapters of 'The Sketcher.' He has admirably succeeded, and was delighted with the facility which it allowed him, and with the unclogged pure look, which was so evident, that a peculiar beauty in the texture was noted by many who were unconscious that the picture was not painted with the common materials. To those who may be prejudiced under the idea that the medium is not oil, it may be as well to say that *it is*, the excellent quality being given to it by its dryer." And, it might have been added, by the magical hand of the painter.

The painter has been compared to Keats. Assuming that Keats was "killed by the *Quarterly*"—which, in view of revelations in the later biographies of the poet, is a large assumption—the comparison is not altogether well-founded. Müller's abiding resource in all the troubles born of hope deferred was work, work, work. He was an insatiable toiler, as Mr. Orrock has strikingly pointed out, and wrought with a passionate love of his art. Such a man was not likely to eat his heart out, brooding over his wrongs—not that



*Miss Love.*





## James Orrock

these were not real enough. His closing days were unspeakably painful, yet he bore up with undaunted spirit, and, like Thomas Hood, was brave and humorously cheerful to the very last. There is nothing more pathetic in the lives of the great painters than the account of Müller's passing. He died almost with pencil and palette in his hands. Writing to his friend Mr. B. Johnson, September 4, 1845, he says:—

"I was glad of your letter to-day. I am a little better, and *much* since Thursday last. I *have* painted three pictures!!! One, a fine piece of colour of some beautifully richly coloured flowers, in gold vase, with gems, &c. I send it to Peel to be flattened in mahogany panel. They will not allow me to paint larger than 25 or 28 inches by corresponding size.

"It is curious, I have lost no vigour, no colour, can now (paint) easily as ever, and yet I at times can hardly write a line. I have also a beautiful study for colour I have lent me—some humming-birds; they will paint prettily."

It was the last letter he ever penned. Four days after, he was dead.

Writing in 1875, Mr. N. Neal Solly, the biographer of the great painter, said, "I feel, indeed, convinced that if an exhibition of Müller's principal works in oil, including also a fair and adequate selection from his sketches (the subjects to include some of various dates, so as to constitute a history of his progress in art)—if, I say, such an exhibition could be organised in London, it would be a source of very great enjoyment to all true lovers of art, and clearly demonstrate Müller's genius, power, and versatility as an artist." Did Mr. Solly feel as one whispering in the wilderness when he gave utterance to that wild aspiration? Twenty-one years later, there was such an exhibition of Müller's works as he had timidly foreshadowed, or hoped for; but it was Birmingham, and not London, that gathered the pictures together, and revealed their

## James Orrock

beauty and grandeur to an admiring and not altogether unamazed multitude. In a brief review of the exhibition, the *Times* was of opinion that "Müller has had, for the last thirty years, a high reputation among wealthy collectors, who have sometimes pushed his pictures at auction to prices beyond all reason; and though he was certainly neither a Constable nor a Turner, there is in his best work a sweep of line and a strength of colour which make his attractiveness easy to understand. He deserved an exhibition like this, and his reputation will probably be strengthened by it." Again, with reference to Lord Burton's "large 'Turkish Merchants with Camels passing the Mangerchi River,'" the same writer said, "like all Müller's work, this picture received bad treatment at the Royal Academy, probably through the jealousy of Creswick. It would have been a poor consolation to the artist had he been told that fifty years after his death his picture would have been sold for many thousands. But such is the case; such has been the swing of the pendulum of fashion. We will not attempt to justify either extreme, for Müller no more deserves to be raised to the level of Turner and Corot than he deserves the severity of the official art of his own day." "Fashion," indeed! But there was more than fashion in it. Great art lives and bad perishes, let the pendulum of Fashion swing as it may. As to the "prices beyond all reason" that have in our day been paid for the finest of Müller's works, do they not somewhat represent a sort of atonement to the artist for the collectors' neglect of him while he lived and well-nigh starved? But

"'Tis the old story!—ever the blind world  
Knows not its Angels of Deliverance  
Till they stand glorified 'twixt earth and heaven.  
It stones the Martyr; then, with praying hands,  
Sees the God mount his chariot of fire,  
And calls sweet names and worships what it spurned."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Massey.

## CHAPTER XIII

Mr. Orrock's lectures, papers, and speeches—The chief of these—Lecture "On the Claims of the British School of Painting to a thorough representation in the National Gallery," delivered at the Society of Arts—Exhibition of works by illustrious masters not represented in the national collection—Runic and Celtic Art—Great miniature painters, wood-engravers, and mezzotinters—Our encouragement of foreign masters—Constable, the founder of the modern French school—England a nation of colourists—Our landscapes in oil and water colour—English water-colours supreme—Their inadequate representation in the National Gallery—Mis-spent bequests—A worthier display of the water-colours we possess required—The comments of the press—Presentation of the silver medal of the Society of Arts to Mr. Orrock for his lecture.

IN the fulfilment of what he has made his mission, Mr. Orrock has bettered the proverbial admonition to "strike while the iron is hot." Ever since he took upon himself the promulgation of the claims of English Art on the attention and encouragement of the nation, he has been striking without intermission to make the iron hot. And, although there is yet vastly more to be done, he has not struck in vain. He is full of his subject, and on all suitable occasions with voice and pen English Art has been and is his subject. In earnestly prepared lectures—always welcome and constantly demanded—which he has delivered before London and provincial audiences; as to the latter, in the Midlands especially, at the opening of Art Exhibitions and the presentation of prizes at Art Schools; in papers published by art and other journals, and in after-dinner speeches, Mr. Orrock has kept on telling his story, and has put forth his plea. It is a story in many chapters, and the plea is fruitful of enlightening variants; but "one increasing purpose runs" through the whole. To recite in these pages even a tithe of what he has written or has had reported in the public press would be to encumber the chronicle to no useful end. It suffices, where the theme demands



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or appears to appropriately admit of an apt quotation, to give that and no more. Mr. Orrock is a convinced and militant propagandist, and he therefore sticks to his text. Arguments multiply, illustrations grow with him and are ever multiplying and growing, but the root-idea is unchanged. In endeavouring to represent him fully, regard has been had as far as possible to the obligations of proportion and "perspective." In the essays on the English masters, the controversies in which he has taken a prominent, not to say a leading part, and other matters where his voice and his only has a right to be heard, Mr. Orrock speaks at length. That latitude is obviously demanded in relation to a lecture on "English Art" delivered at the Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi, on Tuesday, March 11, 1890. The specific title of the lecture was "On the Claims of the British School of Painting to a thorough representation in the National Gallery." Sir James D. Linton took the chair, and pictures by illustrious English Masters, whose works are not included in the National Gallery, were exhibited by Mr. Orrock. The paper which follows not only covers the whole ground, but affords an embodiment of the views of the lecturer, more complete perhaps than any other similar deliverance :—

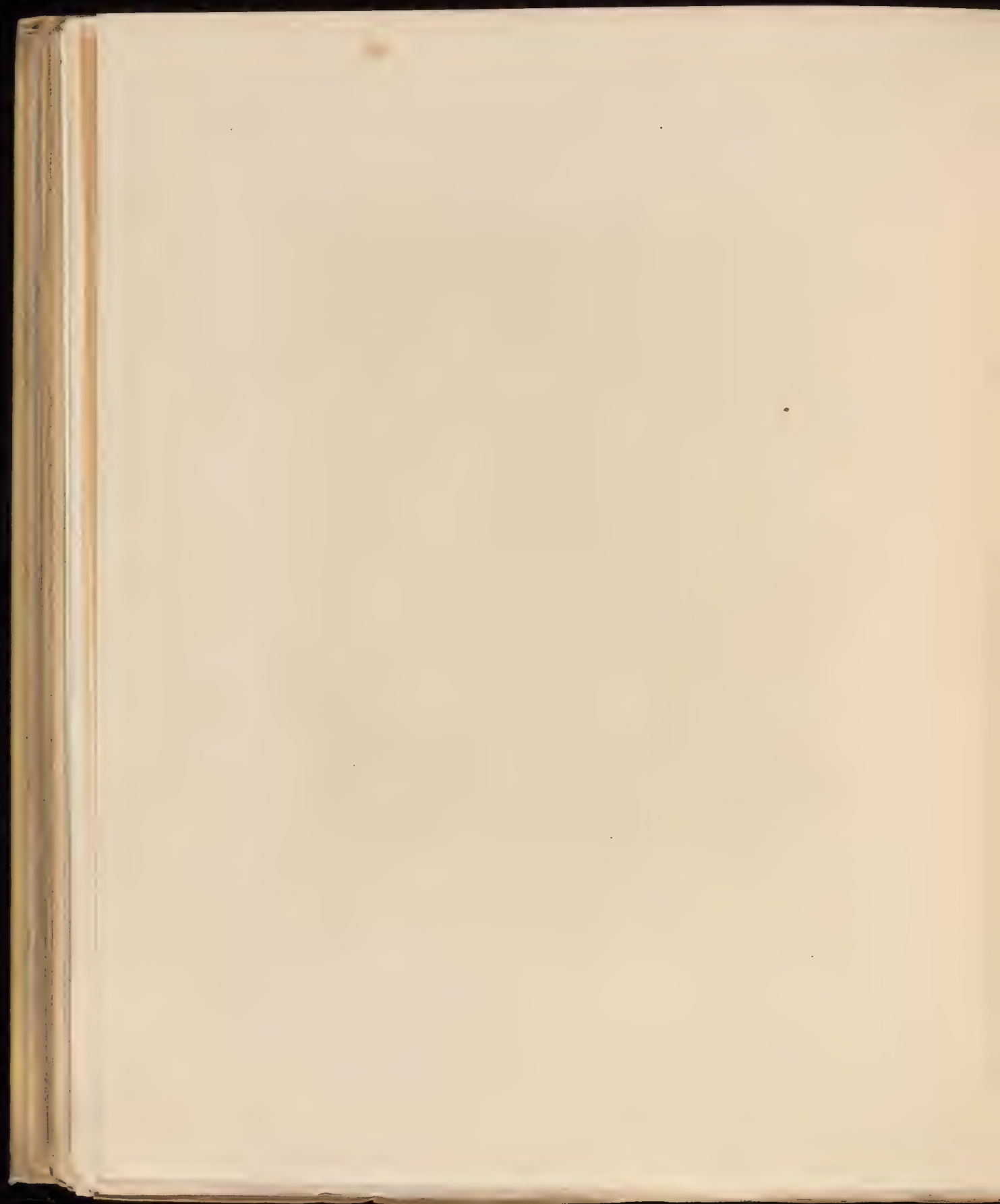
"The subject of my lecture is one which has engaged for years the attention of all lovers of British Art; for the representation of the English School of Painting in our National Gallery is a matter of great public importance.

"Before I enter upon the scheme for the righting of our wrongs, I will as briefly and clearly as possible endeavour to give you the reasons why our Art ought to be fairly represented, not only to our own people, but to the world at large. Foreigners, and even our own kith and kin, have constantly twitted us with having 'no school of painting'; they have gone further, and said that, as a nation, we have no artistic taste whatever. It will be very easy to prove that the contrary is the fact, and that we have not only always had a strong artistic feeling, but have actually





*Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick*



## James Orrock

produced a great school of painting, as well as masters in many other departments of Fine Art.

"Our national art reaches as far back as the Runic monuments in stone, and the Celtic designs in metal. Our Saxon, Norman, and Early-English Gothic, and our Tudor Gothic, ecclesiastical and domestic, compare with and probably excel in beauty and simplicity anything of their kind in the world. Throughout the Middle Ages England was pre-eminent in what was then one of the most important arts; I mean the art of embroidery and the decoration of stuffs. The treasury of many a foreign cathedral contains specimens of work with English needles, which is still unrivalled. We have produced artistic metal work for centuries, and, although it is probable that much of it was executed by foreign artists, still, our artistic tastes led us to possess it. We have produced great miniature painters—Nicolas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver lived in Queen Elizabeth's and James the First's time; Samuel Cooper during the Commonwealth, and Richard Cosway in Reynolds's time. We have had *Line Engravers* of the highest class; Sir Robert Peake in the sixteenth century, and William Faithorne in the seventeenth—Flatman, his friend, wrote:

'A Faithorne sculpsit, is a charm can save  
From dull oblivion and a gaping grave.'

There were Sir Robert Strange and William Woollett in the eighteenth century, and Sharp and William Blake. William Miller of Edinburgh, recently dead, was the only man who could translate into black and white the mysteries and subtilties of Turner's water-colours. This inartistic country has produced some of the finest wood engravers: the brothers Thomas and John Bewick head the list; Luke Clennell, their pupil, John Jackson and others continue it. Until recently we had W. J. Linton, the father of wood engraving in America; and we have still one of the brothers Dalziel, and W. Biscombe Gardner; with designers

## *James Orrock*

for goldsmith's work, and before them Flaxman and Stothard, whose names are classic.

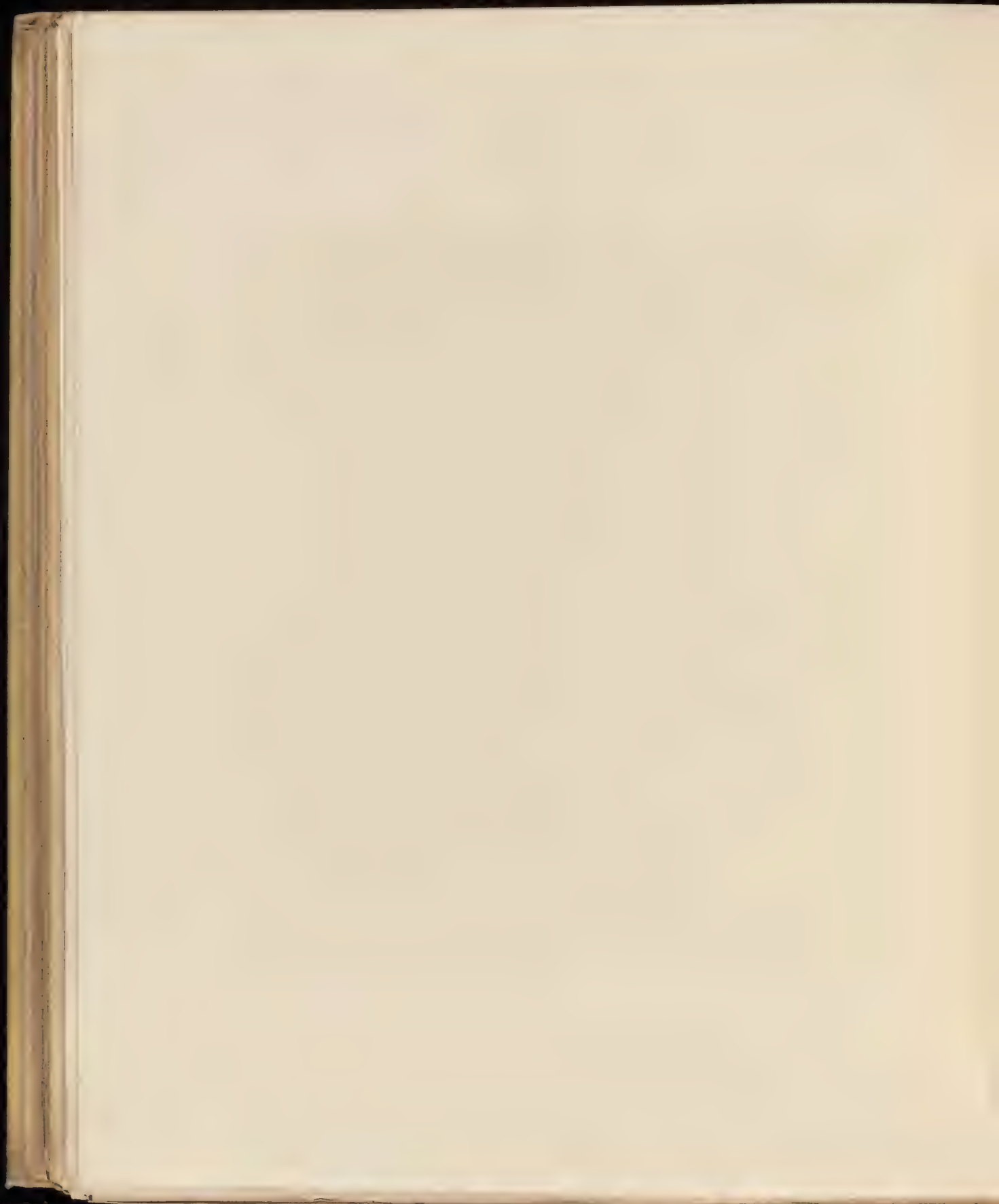
"The English Mezzotinters, moreover, stand alone in their walk of art. Their names are legion, so I must be content to only enumerate a few. John Smith, who produced the celebrated engravings from Kneller's portraits; James M'Ardell, of whom Reynolds said his mezzotints after his own pictures 'would confer immortality upon the painter;' Valentine Green, with his successors, Saml. Wm. Reynolds, Charles Turner, and, later on, John Lucas and Samuel Cousins. Then there were John Raphael Smith and his pupils, J. Young, James and William Ward, and a host of others. These men were so perfect, because most of them were painters and gave the painter's feeling and knowledge to their works.

"Our artistic taste led us to appreciate and employ the talent of Mabuse in Henry VII.'s reign; Holbein in Henry VIII.'s; Sir. A. More in Mary's; and Rubens and Van Dyke in Charles I.'s. In Charles II.'s reign Lely and the two Vandevelde were the chief painters. There were, however, native artists also who painted for our kings and queens. Nicolas Hilliard, Isaac and Peter Oliver; George Jameson, the 'Scottish Vandyke'; and William Dobson, the 'English Tintoret'; Robert Walker, Cromwell's painter; and Richard Gibson, the dwarf. The foundation of the modern English School dates from the reign of Queen Anne, when Sir James Thornhill was commissioned to paint the dome of St. Paul's. As a proof of our artistic taste, it is probable that even now, in spite of the continuous drain for foreign museums and private collections, we have still in this country more magnificent pictures by the great masters than there are in every other country on earth. I mean, of course, in private collections. This can be proved by the seemingly exhaustless mine of art from which the exhibitions of the Old Masters at Burlington House have been annually supplied. But, strangely enough, with all this love of art, our rulers have made few efforts to conserve our native talent, although the





*Fishing Boats & Hulks at the Cove.*



## James Orrock

example to do so has always been before them in the national galleries of other countries in small states and even in cities. We have a splendid National Gallery of the works of other great deceased artists, but our *own school* is not thoroughly represented. Had it not been for the munificence of a number of donors, the English School would have had no place whatever.

"Foreigners, as I have said, declare that we have 'no school'—we answer boldly and truly, But we have the sure and lasting foundation of a school, viz.—*many masters*; each master possessing a marked individuality, and being therefore capable of forming a school of his own. The proof of this is, that one of those masters has formed the most favoured school of landscape of modern times. Is not John Constable the founder and master of the modern French School? Did he not lay down the lines for Corot, Rousseau, Daubigny, Duprez, Dias, and the rest? He has even caused the school he himself made to dilute, by reflex action, our own English art. Constable is still the master, however, and probably will so continue. Had Turner, Crome, Cotman, De Wint, Cox, Müller, and others of our masters been as well known as Constable, there would have been a battle of the schools of those great painters. They are, however, our reserves. Another proof that we have always been an art-loving race is that, in addition to storing up pictures by the great Italians, we were the first and, for a time, the only supporters of Cuyp, Hobbema, Ruysdael, and other celebrities of the Flemish and Dutch schools. This accounts for the number of fine examples of those painters which we have stored in this country. The fear, in reference to our own art, is that before long the prices of pictures by the English masters will reach a very high level; and instead of our having them at reasonable, I might say small prices, we shall have to pay enormous sums. A Romney, for example, a very few years ago could have been bought for £500 which now is thought moderately priced at £10,000. It is a fallacy to suppose that

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any foreign pictures, no matter by whom, have risen as rapidly in price as numbers of the English pictures. The cry is, Secure the works of foreign deceased masters, for they will never be offered again; the cry ought to be, Secure fine examples of our own school, for not only will prices soon be prohibitive, but other English-speaking nations, Americans and Australians, will outbid you. Fortunately for us, our British collection, thanks to the patriotic spirit of some princely donors, is rich in the works of several of our great men. We are rich in Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, and Landseer, but this is by no means the case with a multitude of other English masters; and, to the disgrace of the authorities, we have no suitable gallery for the proper exhibition of our national art of painting in water-colours; of that, however, I shall speak presently.

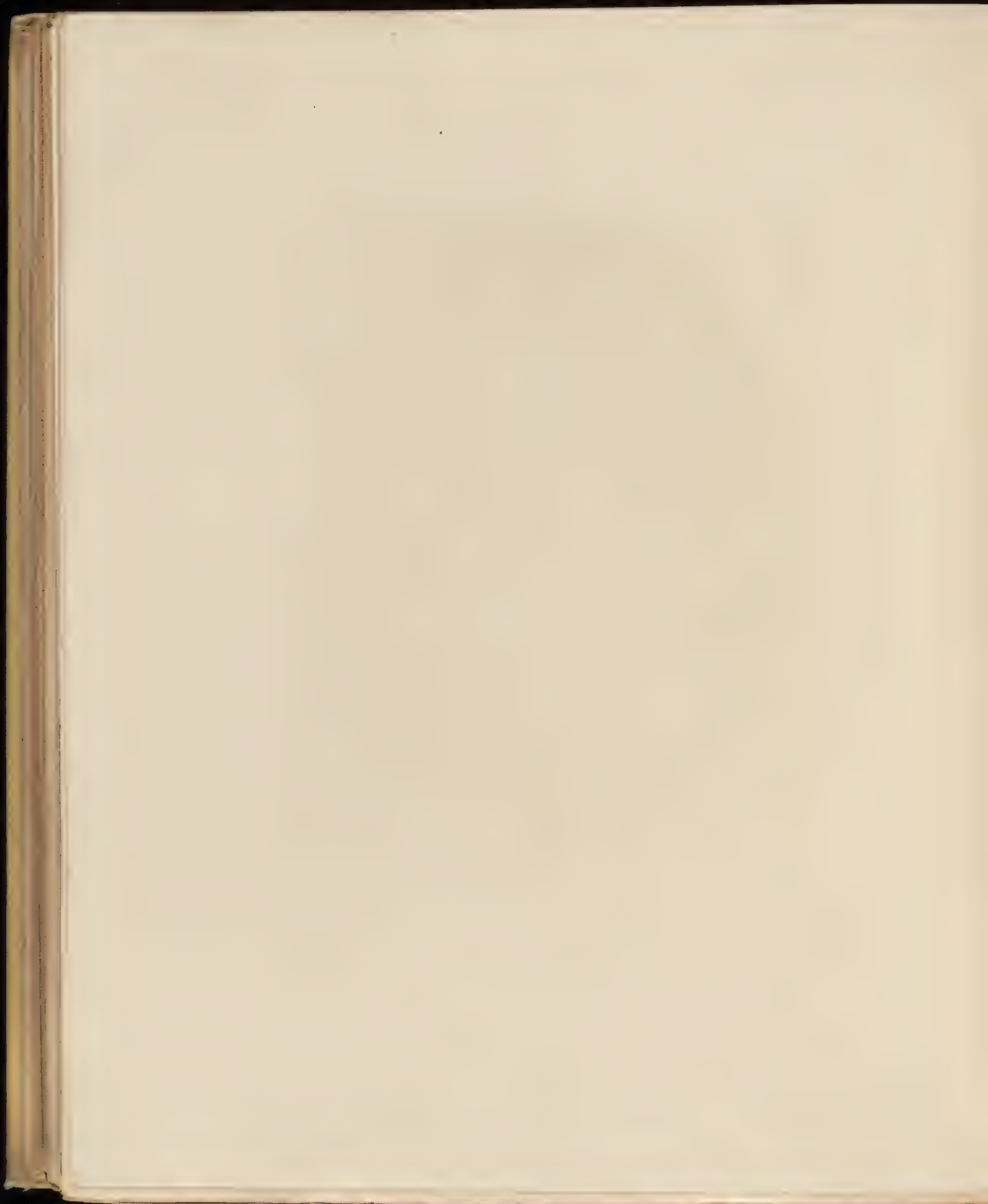
“Having done my best to prove that we do not deserve to be called an inartistic nation, I will now endeavour to advance our claims to a proper representation in the National Gallery. Carlyle takes the liberty to ‘deny altogether the Frenchman’s criticism, that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*, or if so, it is not the hero’s blame, but the valet’s, for the valet does not know a hero when he sees him. Alas, no! it requires a kind of hero to do that.’ It requires a kind of hero also to know the merits of the great English painters of whom I shall now speak. Hear what the great art-analyser and critic says on the subject:—

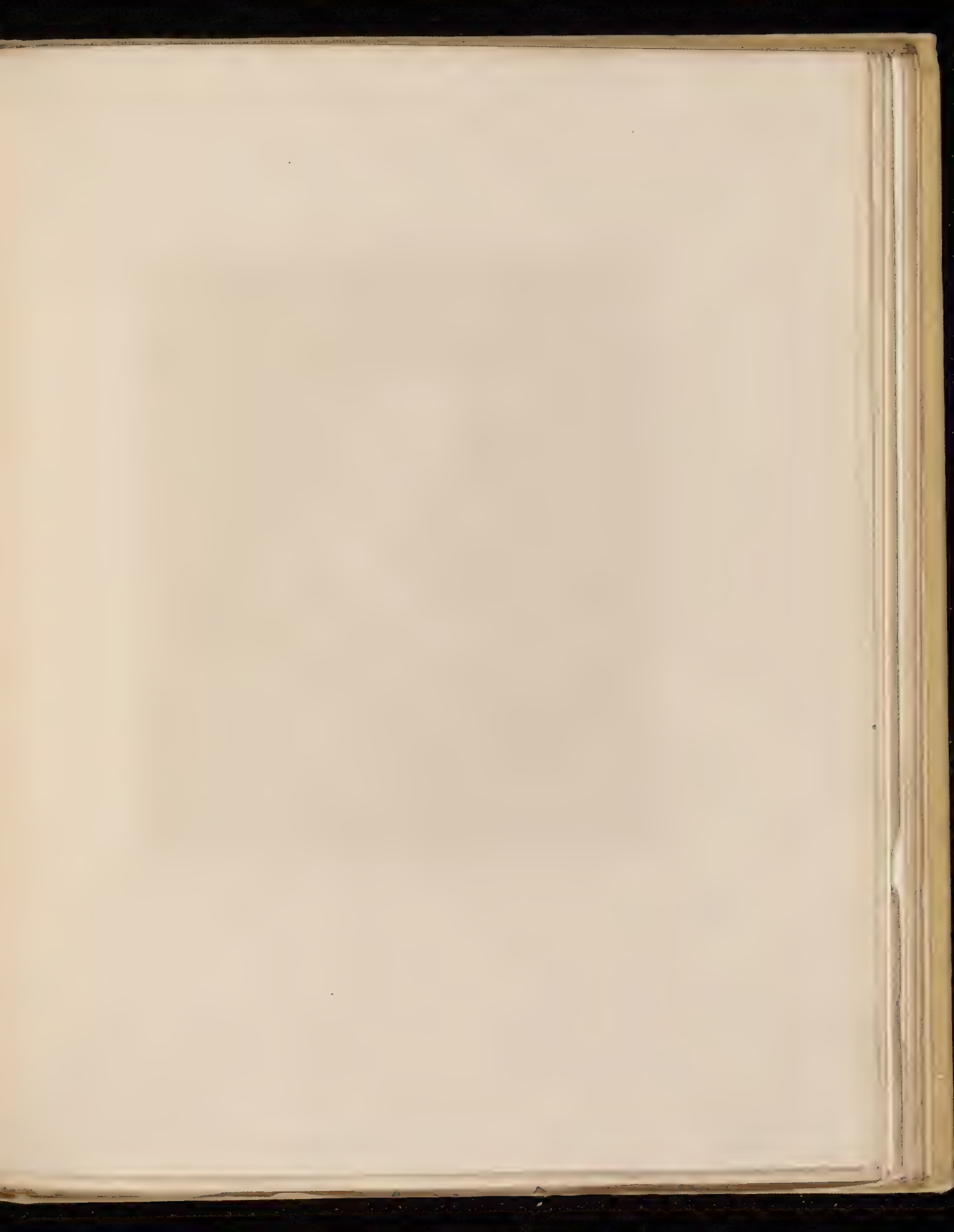
“‘If it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings, which deny deserved honour and award what is undue, have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain





c 16<sup>th</sup> Decr.







by J. M. W. Turner

after the original by J. M. W. Turner

M<sup>rs</sup> Merdaunt.



## James Orrock

consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature; for it is an insult to what is really great in either to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean or uncultivated faculties. It is a matter of the simplest demonstration that no man can be really appreciated but by his equal or superior. His inferior may overestimate him in enthusiasm, degrade him in ignorance, but he cannot form a grounded and just estimate. It is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually. The question is not decided by them but for them; decided by few, by fewer in proportion as the merits of a work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank and mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle, each rank being so far cognisant of the superiority of that above it as to receive its decision with respect, until in process of time the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of *faith*—the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.

"This reasoning of Professor Ruskin is constantly proved sound, and I firmly believe, and this after long experience, that there are probably not a hundred men in these islands whose judgment is trustworthy as to the sterling and lasting merits of the work of some of our most celebrated masters, especially in landscape. Most people want a history, and unless this is forthcoming a consummate work of genius is often thrust aside and denounced as a forgery; when the pedigree is established, as it frequently is, the confessed merit and the price move

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upwards together. Names are understood, but merit, as Ruskin says, must be taken on *faith*.

"I am not now speaking of expert knowledge, but of that knowledge which alone leavens the lump—in fact, of the knowledge of the connoisseur, which decides the place of the subtle painter for all ages. If this power be so rare, is it to be wondered at that busy officials and careless voters should pass by merit, which only few can discern? We must appeal, then, to their *faith*, as Ruskin says.

"Englishmen, with their broad spirit of liberality and its mixture with the traditional feeling that, in matters of taste and artistic power, they are inferior beings, have always bowed the knee and humbled themselves before foreign nations in matters of fine art. This abject race is, or has been, nevertheless, a nation of colourists, with a pronounced genius of its own; as pronounced as its literature, its military courage, its civilisation. We are descended in a direct line from the Venetians, through the Flemish and Dutch; of course, Spain, France, and Germany have also produced great painters, but, in the main, those which I have named are the *three* great Schools of colour.

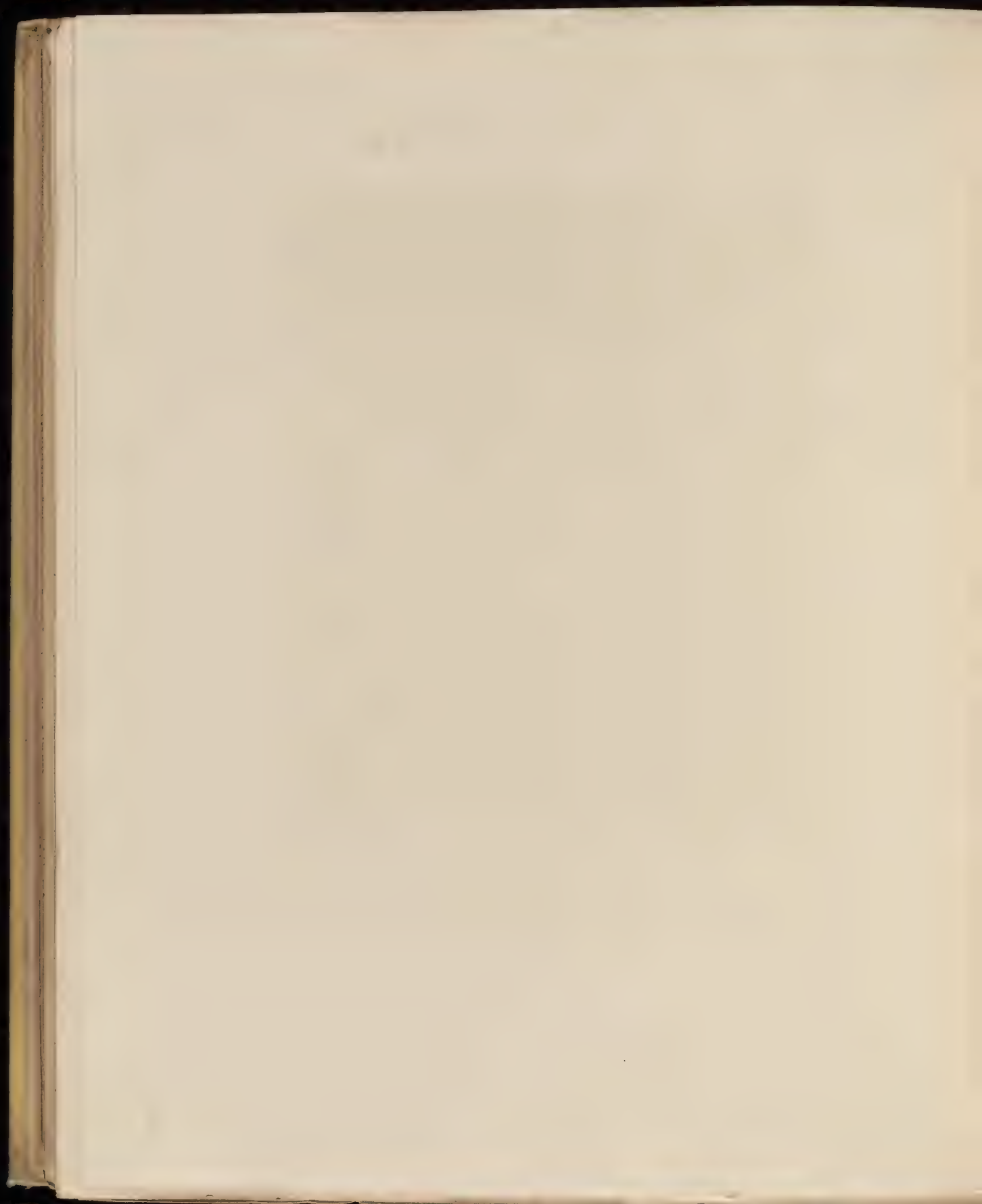
"This may not be thought the highest praise, but all great painters, whatever other powers they might possess, have been great colourists; and the secret desire of every painter who uses colours is to be a colourist. Let us hear the Professor again—'All men completely organised and justly tempered enjoy colour; it is meant for the perpetual comfort and delight of the human heart; it is richly bestowed on the highest works of creation, and the eminent sign and seal of perfection in them; being associated with *life* in the human body, with *light* in the sky, with *purity* and hardness in the earth: death, night, and pollution of all kinds being colourless.' Again he says, 'If colour be introduced at all, it is necessary that, whatever else may be wrong, *that* should be right.' Hence the business of a painter is to paint. If he can colour, he is a painter, although he can do



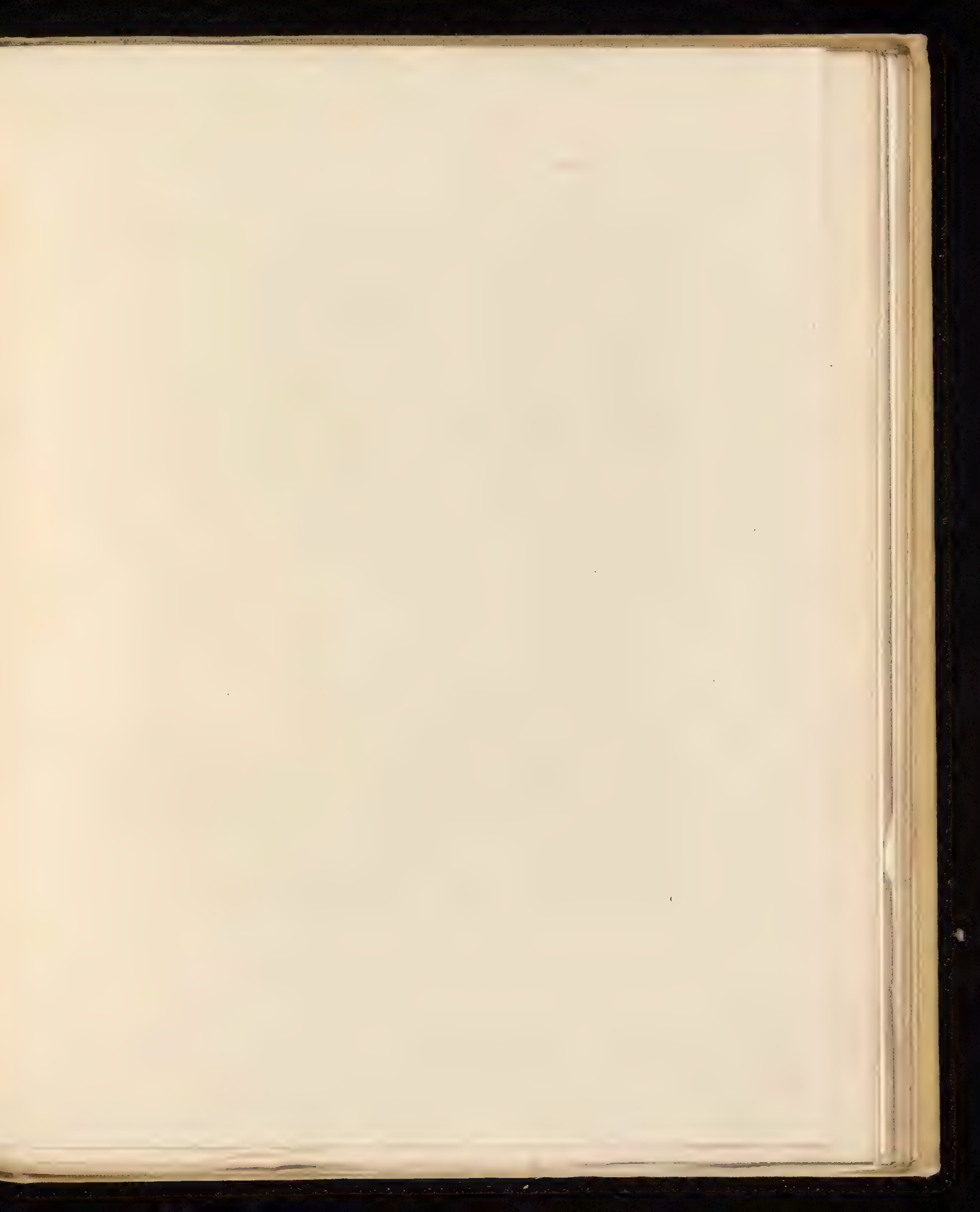
Henry Thomson del. & sculp.

1800. Fraser. 1800.

*Master Fraser.*









*The Hon. Wm. Graham.*

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nothing else; if he cannot colour, he is *no* painter, though he may do everything else. But it is in fact impossible, if he can colour, but that he should be able to do more; for a faithful study of colour will always give power over form, though the most intense study of form will give no power over colour. Great power over colour is always a sign of large general art-intellect. To colour well requires real talent, and to colour perfectly is the rarest and most precious power an artist can possess. Every other gift may be erroneously cultivated, but this will guide to all healthy, natural, and forcible truth. The student may be led into folly by philosophers and into falsehood by purists; but he is always safe, if he holds the hand of a colourist. As we are or have been a nation of colourists, it is something to be proud of, no matter what sneers may have been bestowed upon us, for we possess in our masters the 'rarest and most precious power an artist can possess.'

"Our Art, as I have said, is founded mainly on the Italian and Dutch Schools; but our insular artistic character lies in our being healthy *impressionist* painters. All Art, we know, is impressionist art, no matter how minute and realistic, but the English adopted for the most part what is technically called a looser and freer mode of expression than most of their predecessors, although as to the former there were exceptions, such as Rembrandt, Franz Hals, Velasquez, Rubens, &c.

"The English Art is like the English man: frank, manly, vigorous, sympathetic, delicate, and above all *healthy*. He sees nature with a clear and fresh vision, and his own nature is to avoid all that is morbid or mawkish in sentiment. Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Raeburn, and Morland were prominent among figure and portrait painters. They were healthy impressionists and colourists.

*"When we look into the work of our great landscape painters, whether in oil or water-colours, it is not too much to say that we find in their technique a means of recording pictorial impressions of*

## James Orrock

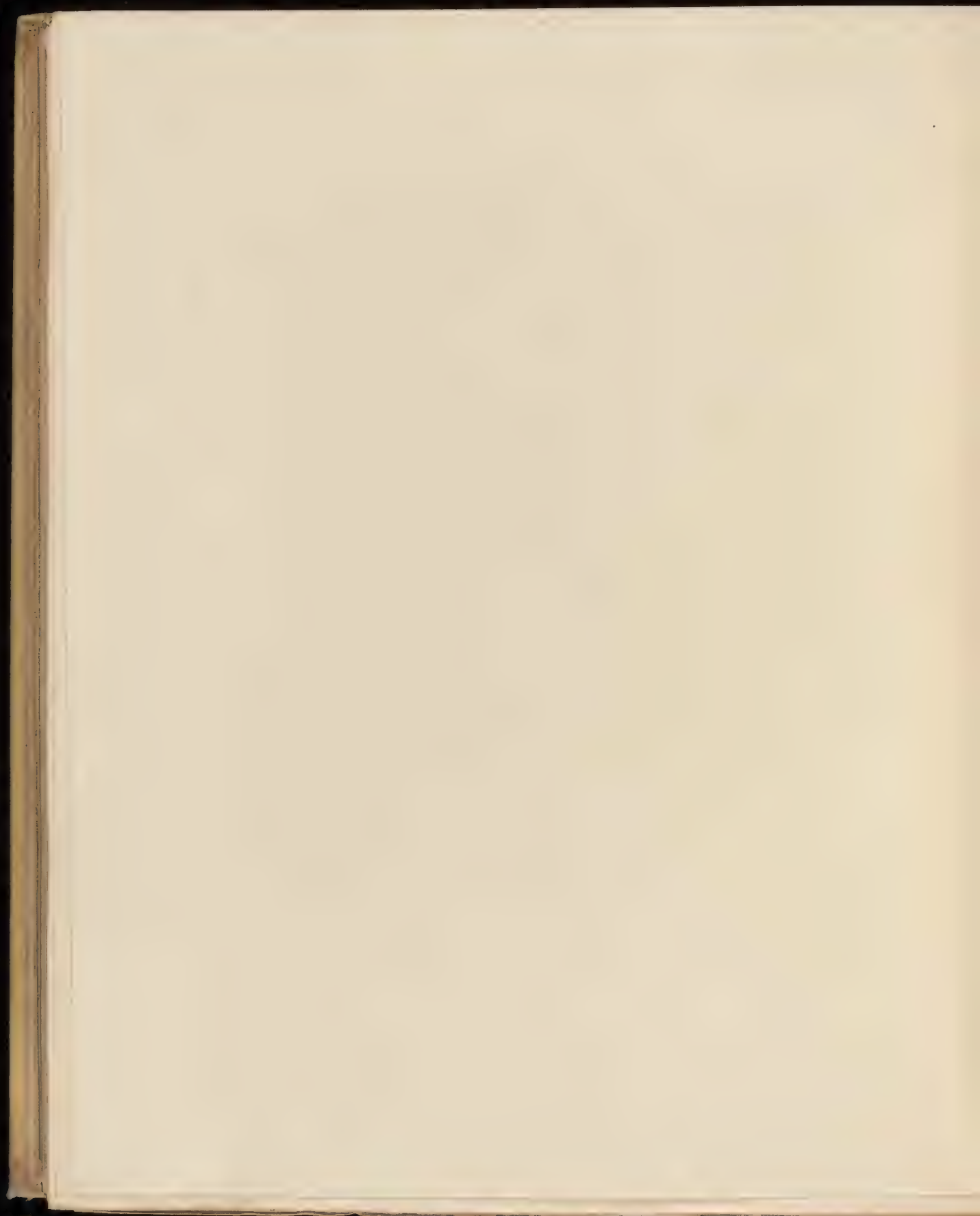
*the truest and sincerest kind, which has never been excelled in its infinite flexibility.*

"In a word, it is as complete and expressive as anything of the sort the world has ever seen. The colours seem jewelled and afloat as it were in amber, and the handling is as unerring as that of the skilled musician. Our English landscape has been pointedly neglected, especially in water-colours. It is perhaps a sign of its greatness, as the same thing has been in the case of literature and science. Ruskin, whose art study has been general, gives most of his attention to landscape; he is at war with the masses for their blindness to beauty, both in nature and in art. In speaking of the sky he says: 'The noblest scenes of earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them; but the sky is for all, it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust, and yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject for thought. If, in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet; and another, it has been windy; and another, it has been warm: Who among the whole chattering crowd can tell me of the forms and precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds, when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed unregretted as unseen; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies; not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed; God "is not in the earthquake nor in the fire, but in the still small voice," this eloquence is for art as well as nature, and England's great landscape painting has shared the





*The Rialto, Venice*



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neglect with nature. Our water-colour painters, especially, have been uniformly treated with contempt, but not by the art-loving people—oil painters have been their enemies.'

"Strangely enough, its recognition came from Literature—Ruskin devoted his genius to its service—'Modern Painters' was written chiefly to bring forward this Cinderella, and, in spite of the power of her proud sisters, she was chosen to illustrate in 'Modern Painters' the varied phenomena of sky, earth, vegetation, the Turnerian light and mountain glooms and glories which the *great master* had made ready in water-colours—Ruskin's study of Art and keen observation of Nature led him to take up landscape painting as an entirely new theme. Hitherto it had remained an unexplored region, and he was doubly fortunate to find the mystic Turner for his interpreter—Turner's genius had full play in his water-colours, and we are told by Ruskin, who knew him, that he used this medium for his '*intense study of nature*.'

"In the water-colour school of England we have many masters; and, although foreigners have been ever slow to give us our due as oil painters, they have always freely granted us the *only* place for our water-colours. Our Cinderella has had, despite her neglect, the highest honours which could be paid her; she has had the homage of the most eloquent art critic that ever wrote, she was chosen to illustrate the only work that was ever written on *landscape* art, and the crystal slipper was presented to her in truth by, perhaps, the greatest writer of poetic prose in the English language. The second honour came from Turner himself, for, as we are told, he selected this medium for his '*intense study of Nature*.' All this, and yet we have not even a room for the permanent exhibition of our beloved Art! Painters, connoisseurs, and amateurs cannot improve their taste or cultivate their talents, and foreign nations conclude we have 'no school.'

"I may here state a truth not generally known, but a startling truth nevertheless. The best landscape painters in water-colours have also been the best painters in oil, and for this reason: the

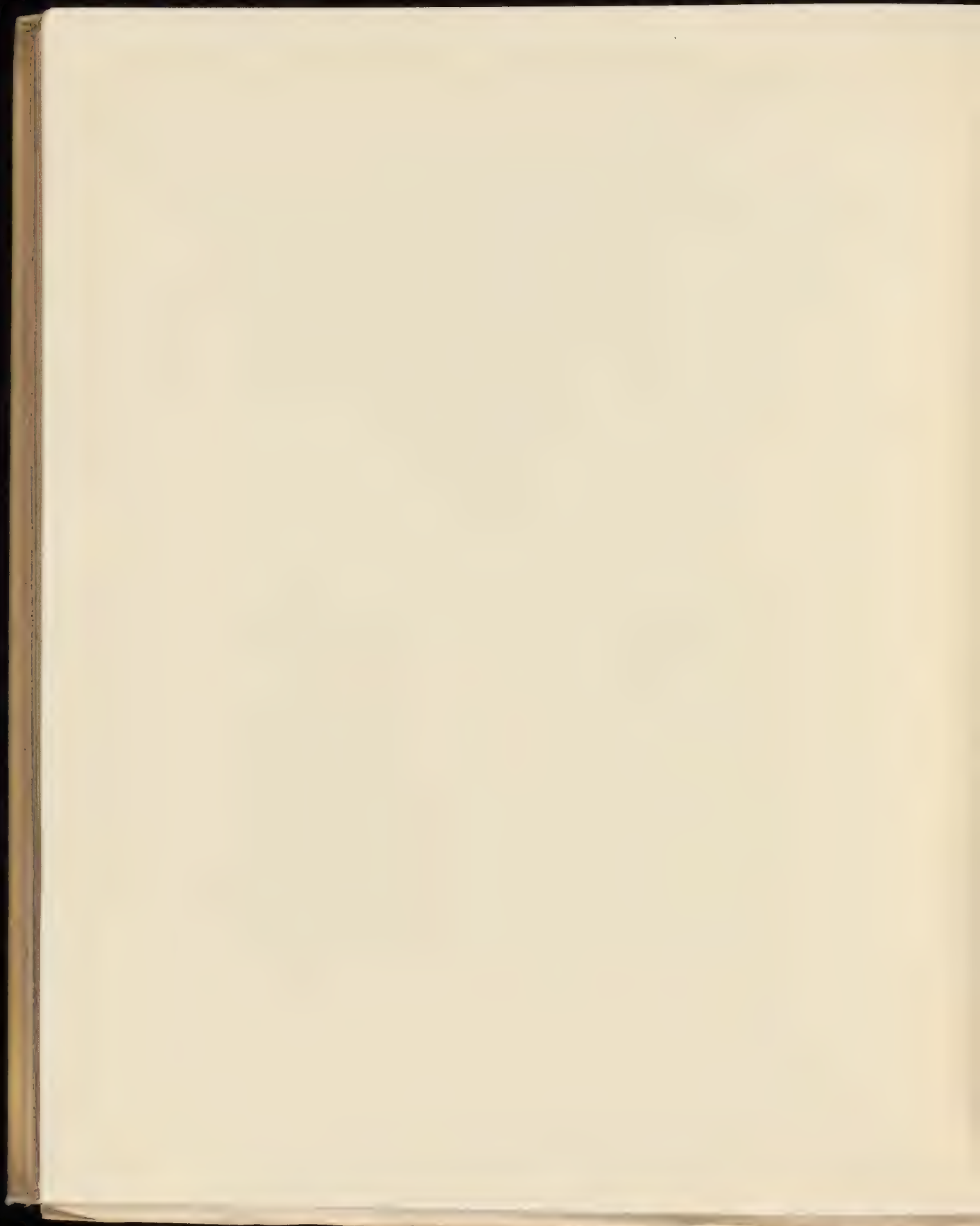
## James Orrock

practice in water-colour, by the masters at least, has always been pure and direct, and any scraping or lifting of colour to obtain grey lights and half lights is added after the *first intention* work is complete. Turner was the greatest master of all in this technique. He was always inferior, by comparison, in oil. The best oil painters have almost invariably been the most direct and simple, and the value—I may say the visible presence—of the first virgin painting in the works of the best painters, in landscape at least, is clearly seen in the finished pictures. It is the fashion for the ignorant and vain to wave the hand of contempt at the humble water-colour painter when he paints in oil; but Turner, Cotman, Cox, De Wint, Fielding, Barret, Holland, Chambers, Müller, and a multitude of water-colour painters of the highest class, in spite of all this scorn, take to-day the first position. With the single exception of Turner, most of those celebrated masters are not even represented in the National Gallery. It is true that in the South Kensington Museum there are two noble De Wint pictures, and a magnificent oil Barret, which I myself had the honour of presenting to the museum, making it a condition that this work *in oil* should hang near the two others in oil by an equally renowned water-colourist. In the National Gallery we ought to have selected pictures in *both* mediums by all our great painters, so that we might be able to study our own art. When from time to time I have directed the attention of the chief official of the National Gallery to the desirability of securing at Christie's salerooms some fine and rare example of one or other of our masters, I have always been met with the reply 'There are no funds.' I observe, however, in the official report that in 1863 £10,000 was left for the purchase of pictures for the nation by Mr. Thomas Dennison Lewis; that in 1878 £2612 was left by Mr. Richard Charles Wheeler; in 1881 £23,104 by Mr. Francis Clarke, and in 1885 £10,000 by Mr. John Lucas Walker = £45,716 in all. Those sums of money might have been left for the purchase of pictures by deceased foreign artists; but if so, how comes it about that several insignificant *English* pictures have been purchased from





FIREPLACE OF BACK DRAWING-ROOM  
*Seen from Front Drawing-Room.*



## James Orrock

time to time out of this money? The funds were, of course, left for the purchase of pictures for the National Collection, and the selection was entrusted to trustees. The only restriction was the other way: Mr. Wheeler directed that the interest from his modest benefaction should be applied entirely to the purchase of works by British artists. I quote an example of purchases which will clearly explain why there are no funds for English pictures. In the annual report, 1885, of the Director of the National Gallery to the Lords of the Treasury, we find the following:—

“‘Under the will of the late Mr. John Lucas Walker the testator bequeathed to the National Gallery the sum of £10,000 to be spent in the purchase of a picture or pictures for the National Collection. The said pictures are to be labelled with the donor's name.’ Out of this sum, in the report for 1887 (March 1) we find the following: £6580 spent on Old Masters, all of which we might have done without; and £2698 for a Walker and a Rossetti. Again, in the report of 1887 we ‘purchased out of the Lewis fund’ English pictures by Opie, by Samuel Scott, and by Thomas Hudson; in all costing £230, 15s. But £650 out of this same fund was paid for an Italian picture of the Ferrarese school. There can be no reasonable objection to our buying as many foreign pictures as our funds will afford, so as to make our collection *historically* as complete as possible; but we want *fine* specimens of English art, with no view to a history, but for the benefit of painters, students, and all lovers of National art. The people, from all I have seen and heard, who pay the taxes, make this reasonable demand, and object to the beneficiary funds, amounting to £45,716, being spent almost exclusively on deceased foreign masters to the neglect of our own. The terse answer to the statement that ‘we have no funds’ is easily given: Devote for the future those funds given or bequeathed by private British benefactors to the purchase of British pictures, and to the accumulation of the best possible collection of native art.

“It is important, in attempting to show how our own art has

## *James Orrock*

been neglected, that we should compare the numbers of British pictures bought with those which have been bequeathed or presented to the National Gallery. I have carefully gone through the numbers in the official catalogue for 1889, and the list is as follows: 279 oil pictures have been given to the nation, and only 49 have been purchased, including those in the Peel collection, which had to be bought in the aggregate. In this list of bequeathed and presented pictures I do not include numbers now on loan to many of our country museums and art galleries, but simply those hanging in the National Gallery in 1889. And I do not hesitate to say that those purchases of our own masters are in the main unsatisfactory, both as to size and quality. If it were necessary, I could name most of them from memory. I am not here, however, to judge of the past, but to inaugurate a better state of things for the future.

"In a pamphlet which Mr. Trueman Wood has kindly placed in my hands, I find that this society made a laudable effort as far back as 1847, on the suggestion of Mr. Henry Cole. He proposed that the society should organise an annual exhibition of pictures of an entirely novel sort. They were exhibitions of the works of single men: several were held, but the result was not encouraging.

"With all deference to this society, which thus made itself, as it were, the pioneer on a road we should all like to tread, I do not think the precedent they had at that time set, should now be followed. In this hall, where so many valuable suggestions have been made, I should like to express my opinion that the only way to bring about the result we all wish for is to obtain promises of money and pictures from English collectors, and thus at least to bring such pressure to bear on the Government, that they may take the formation of a truly British collection in hand. They might begin by directing that the money left to the National Gallery, and not expressively limited to the purchase of foreign pictures, should be used for extending the collection of English Art.

"I am glad to say that several large sums have been already





*Lucca from the Canal Basin.*



## James Orrock

promised, and a number of choice works in water-colours. No doubt, if suitable galleries were found, they would speedily be filled by patriotic donors. As this society has been the pioneer of not a few of our great National art movements, this is the fitting place to speak as I have spoken to-night. Let us all prepare, then, for the fair representation of selected and choice works of our great *deceased* painters in oil and water-colours; and, to avoid friction and complication, let us direct our efforts to this and this alone. It is always safer to build up from the past. Reynolds's words are as true to-day as they were a century ago—"The works of those who have stood the test of ages, have a claim to that respect and reverence to which no modern can pretend."

"Let us urge that the beautiful drawings in water-colour by Turner, including the *Liber Studiorum* itself, together with the noble bequest of De Wint and Cattermole which my friend the late Mr. John Henderson made to the nation, be removed to a more dignified and better-lighted gallery than that which they fill at present, so that they may be seen, not by a cellar light, but by the calm, clear, silver light which is required to allow their infinities and delicacies to be studied and felt. By so acting we shall encourage others to add to the collection, and convince the nations that we indeed have a school. It is not for me even to suggest where the British School Galleries should be; but simply to urge that justice to our own Art should at last be done. I would then earnestly ask your aid for this great national undertaking, and would appeal to men of letters in particular to help us in rousing the nation to a sense of what is due to those painters who, even in the eyes of the long reluctant foreigner, are beginning to take rank among the great high priests of Art."

In a leading article on the substance of the foregoing paper, which appeared in the *Times*, that journal, referring to Mr. Orrock as "a well-known landscape artist," described his plea as "the expression of a feeling that may be said to be permanently present in the minds of many of our painters. It is the complaint of the

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neglect of the British school by the authorities who direct our national collections of pictures, especially the Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Mr. Orrock had no difficulty in showing that the National Gallery does not give so perfect a representation of our own school as it does of the great schools of the Continent, and that in this respect it does not succeed in being truly national. The collection falls short of even a reasonable standard of excellence in many important ways, while, on the other hand, there have been from time to time so many redundant examples of inferior British painters that the Trustees were a few years ago compelled to weed out this portion of the Gallery by means of the ingenious device of a National Gallery Loan Act. The strength and the weakness of the collection is, in fact, the result of the haphazard manner in which it has been made. For the first thirty years of its existence—that is to say, from 1824 to about 1860—scarcely any British pictures were purchased at all. . . . As to the equally important question of our water-colours, Mr. Orrock's attack is even stronger, and he, with others, loudly and forcibly complains that the cellars of the National Gallery are not the place where Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, his hundreds of drawings in water-colours, and such collections as that contained in the Henderson bequest, have a right to be housed." Said the *Saturday Review*, "The lament which Mr. Orrock has uttered to the Society of Arts is one we sincerely sympathise with, and do not quite see our way to satisfy. It is very true that our picture galleries have done too little for native art; but it is also unfortunately most certain that it would now be difficult and costly to the verge of impossibility to put the wrong right." Mr. Orrock does not think so. In fact, he has shown over and over again, answering a question put elsewhere in the *Saturday Review* article, how "to make good the errors of the past." Instead of spending the annual grant on examples of the old pre-Raphaelite masters, devote the greater part of that amount for some years to come to the purchase of English pictures. It is true the latter are costlier



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than they were, but, as between giving a big price for a Raphael or a Constable, let the latter have the preference. "We have ourselves," said the *Standard*, "on more than one occasion pointed out that the time had arrived for putting a term, so far as purchase from the public funds is concerned, to the endless series of 'Virgin, Babe, and Saint,' with which the National Gallery is amply stocked, and which represents the art of the later Middle Ages, and, to a great extent, the connoisseurship of the last generation. Mr. Orrock, perhaps, in some measure over-stated his case . . . but if he was guilty of exaggeration at all, it was of an exaggeration which we do not hesitate to qualify as effective and timely." "Mr. Orrock," said the *Daily Chronicle*, "is himself a water-colourist, and naturally complains that the one art of which Englishmen are consummate masters is discouraged by the Trustees of the National Gallery. The most priceless treasures of British art are confined to the cellars of the Gallery, the Gallery itself being crowded with the work of Continental masters. The one thing which the Trustees seem to avoid is the recognition of the fact that there is an English school."

A note of approval of Mr. Orrock's paper ran through the entire press, and was especially emphatic in journals devoted to the exposition of the Fine Arts. The lecturer had also the honour of receiving the Society of Arts' silver medal. Upon the rim of that distinguished piece of plate—which, not unnaturally, is one of the recipient's most cherished possessions—there is engraved the following: "James Orrock, R.I., for his paper on the 'Claims of the British School of Painting to a thorough representation in the National Gallery.'—Session 1889-90."

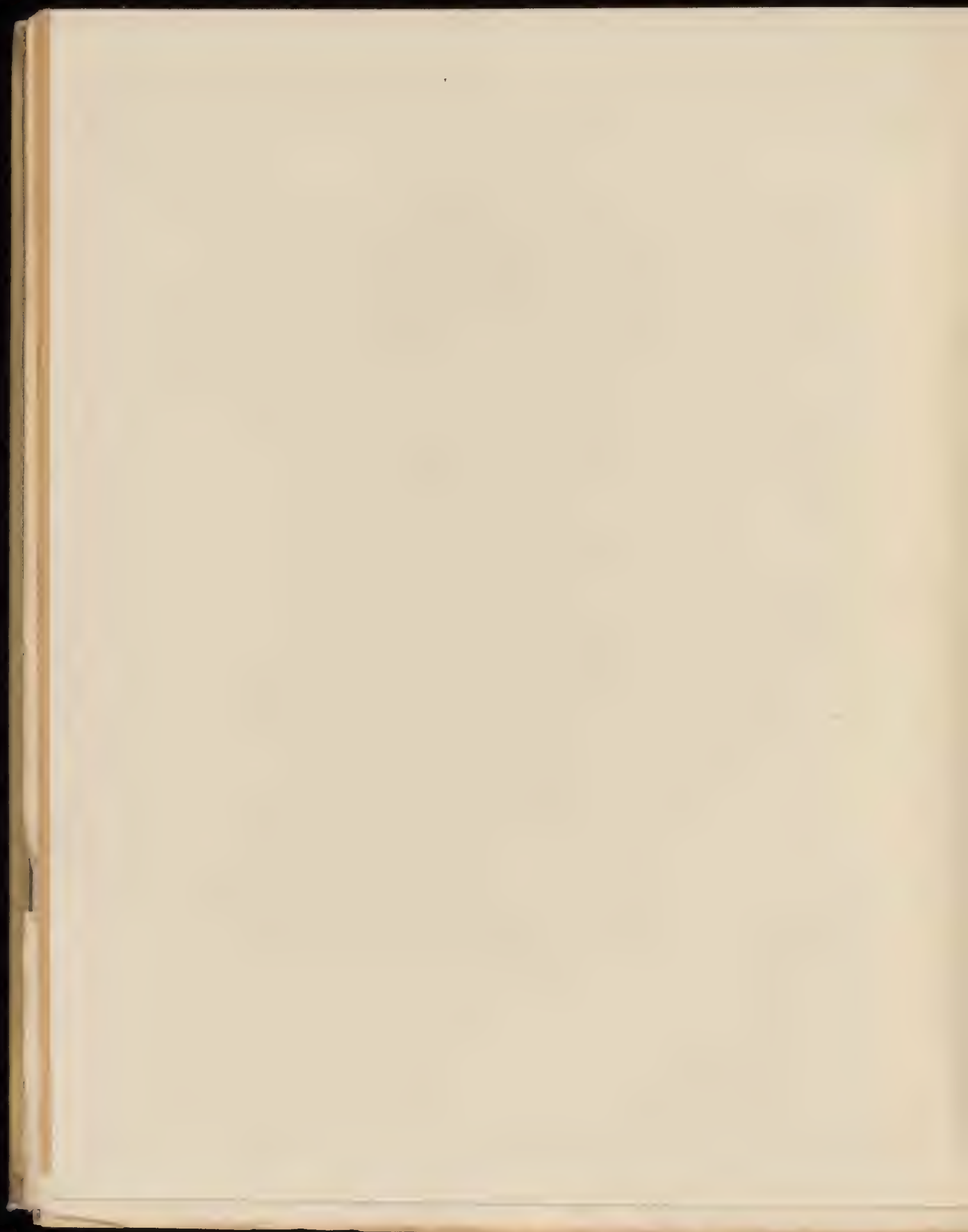
## CHAPTER XIV

The late Mr. John Henderson—His qualities and taste as a collector—His range—His munificent bequest to the nation—The codicil of the will—Mr. Orrock's visit to the British Museum—Letter to the *Times* on the impaired condition of "The Henderson Coxes"—"Deadened and dulled by constant friction"—Confirmation by Sir James D. Linton—Mr. Sidney Colvin's reply—Mr. Orrock's rejoinder—A question of method—"Trench" and "buckle"—An old dispute revived—Mr. E. M. Wimperis takes the field—"Drawings of so superb a quality should be framed"—Mr. Orrock again—"Water-colour drawings 'not' a most perishable branch of fine art"—Mr. Fagan answered—Where are English water-colour drawings to be found in foreign museums?—Summing up by the *Times*.

AMONGST the munificent benefactors of the National Gallery and kindred institutions by deed of gift and bequest the late Mr. John Henderson occupies an honourably conspicuous position. Besides being a perceptive connoisseur in water-colours and a collector of fine works by certain masters of the art, he was an expert in and collector of choice examples of majolica and Damascus pottery, of Oriental, Milanese, Venetian, and other pottery and metal work. If his range of comprehension in acquirement was less wide in certain directions than that of the author of "Vathek," his taste was as fine and his judgment as unerring. They were, in fact, members of the same rare order. Amongst the most interesting of the precious objects of art in the Loan Exhibition at South Kensington some thirty-five years ago were those contributed by Mr. John Henderson. Mr. Orrock and he became intimate friends. The point of contact between them was chiefly the water-colour art. At Christie's, the picture exhibitions, and over each other's collections they frequently conferred and compared opinions. Mr. Henderson, with praiseworthy munificence, bequeathed the gems of the collection of a lifetime to the nation. The codicil of his will in which the precious gift was conveyed ran as follows:—



*The Bay of Bregenz, Bregenz.*





## *James Orrock*

"THIS IS A CODICIL to the last will and testament of me, JOHN HENDERSON, of Montague Street, Russell Square, in the county of Middlesex, Esquire, which will bears date the first day of November 1877. I give and bequeath to the University of Oxford all my Greek and Roman vases and Egyptian antiquities, and it is my wish and desire that the smaller specimens may be placed under glass by the authorities of the said University. I give and bequeath to the trustees for the time being of the British Museum, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, all my water-colour drawings by the following artists, viz., Canaletti, Turner, Girtin, and Cousins, my drawings by David Cox and by William Müller, in Lycia, Egypt, and England. Also, to the trustees for the MS. Department of the said British Museum the Letters of Voltaire and Young addressed to my Grandfather. Also, to the trustees of the said Museum, the silver snuffers that belonged to Cardinal Bainbridge. Also all my Russian Silver and enamels. Also my Damascus, Persian, Rhodian, and Majolica porcelain and pottery; all my Oriental and Venetian metal work, my collection of Oriental Arms; and also my Roman, Greek, and Venetian Glass. I give and bequeath to the trustees for the time being of the National Gallery two pictures of Venice by Canaletti; my drawings framed and other by George Cattermole and by Peter De Wint framed or in Portfolios; and I here offer any of my oil paintings by the Old Masters which the Keeper for the time being of the said National Gallery may select for the said Gallery (except such as are marked or indicated specially as given to any members of my family). All pictures that may be declined by the said Keeper and all articles and things hereinbefore given that the before mentioned legatees or any of them may reject or decline to accept shall fall into and form part of my said residuary estate. And in all other respects I confirm my said will. In witness whereof I the said John Henderson, the testator, have to this my codicil to my said last will and testament set my hand this first day of November 1877.

JOHN HENDERSON.

"Proved with a codicil 23rd December 1878."

## James Orrock

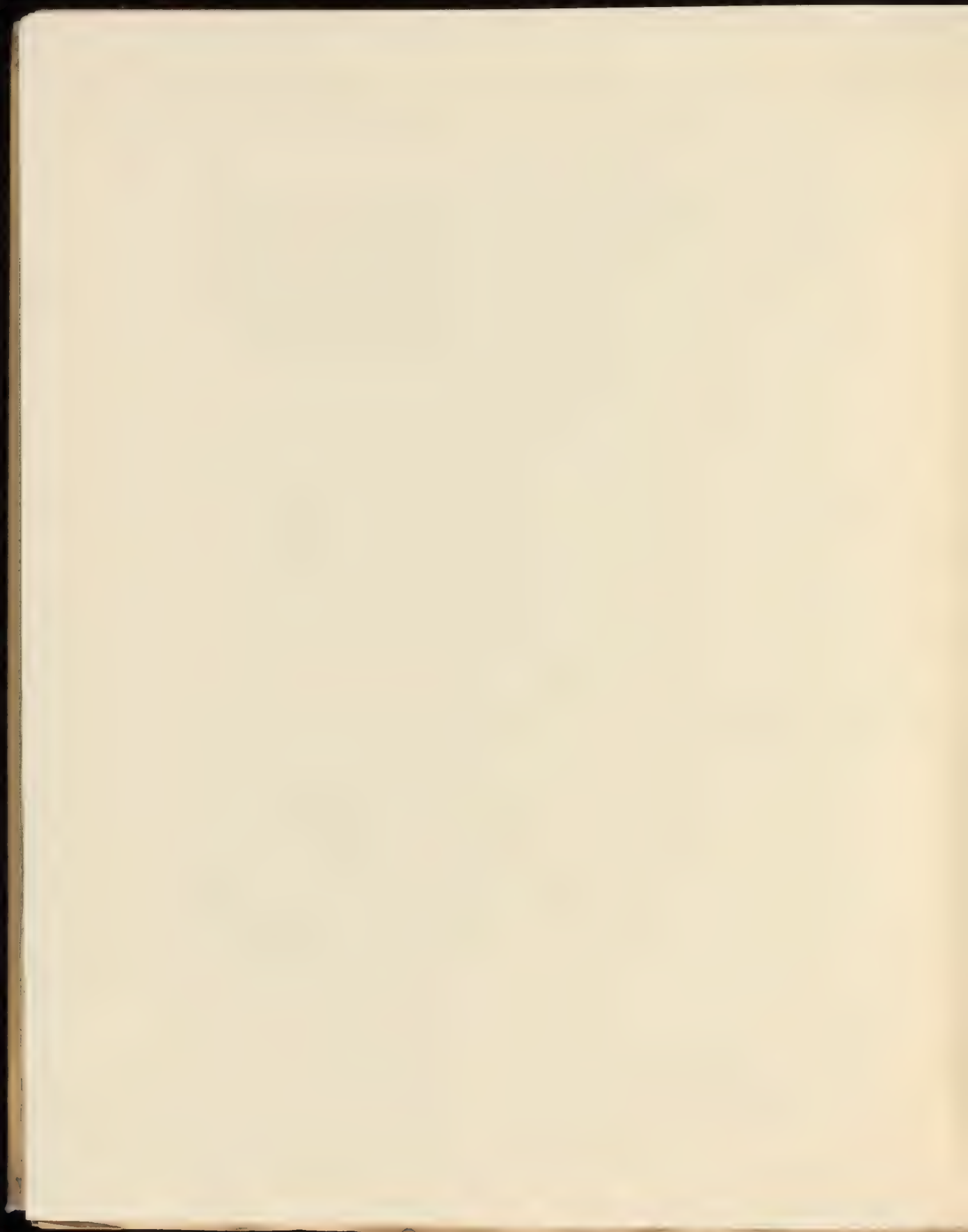
Mr. Orrock knew the drawings, every one, almost as well as the possessor had known them. His, indeed, was a twofold appreciation of Cox's exquisite work, that of the sympathetic water-colour painter—a worker in the same field—as well as that of the connoisseur. Many a time had he and the generous giver examined each particular work. He had had them before him, had handled and scanned them, seated by the side of Mr. Henderson, had looked into the heart and soul of them (to use his own expression), seated and holding each one “on his knees.” It was only natural, therefore, familiar as he was, not only with the works themselves, but also with their brilliant condition when they passed into the custody of the nation, that Mr. Orrock, strenuously zealous in the interest of art for the preservation of such precious heirlooms, should cherish the determination to visit the Print Room of the British Museum in order that he might see and judge for himself whether the officials of that department were employing every possible means to preserve the drawings unimpaired. The opportunity for carrying his resolution into effect did not occur until the end of March 1896. After paying his visit, Mr. Orrock wrote the following letter to the *Times*.<sup>1</sup> Like the majority of his communications to the public press, it led to an animated controversy, in which men of light and leading in the art world took part. Mr. Orrock made the onset in this wise:—

“On March 26 I paid a visit to the British Museum for the purpose of studying and examining the choice collection of water-colour drawings by David Cox, which were left to the nation by the late Mr. John Henderson. As there has been of late years a great controversy as to the best methods of preserving water-colour drawings, I was dismayed to find that the one adopted at the British Museum was, of all others, the most certain to secure their rapid destruction. They are kept from the light in folio-like boxes, out of which the drawings are lifted either singly or in pairs. The surfaces are, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Published March 31, 1896.



WEST WALL OF BACK DRAWING-ROOM  
With D. Cox's "Welsh Funeral," De Wint's "Uverstone"





## *James Orrock*

exposed to friction every time the drawings are turned over, which, I was informed at the museum, takes place continually. The consequence is, nearly every drawing is glazed in broad lines and in patches, and, in addition, wheel-like tracks, which are caused by the sharp edges and corners of the thick mounts being, as it were, thrown down on them, are plainly visible. Some of the drawings are already hopelessly injured, at least from a connoisseur's and collector's point of view. I name, for example, Hayfield, boys fishing, &c., which has the left corner of the drawing literally rubbed out; Court scene, Pen-maen-Mawr, Pont y Cyssyllte, Sea-piece, Barden Tower, Landscape with mountains, cattle, &c., in which some of the cattle are almost obliterated. These are only a sample of the injured drawings. Unless, therefore, something is done, and quickly, there will be nothing left of intrinsic value to show the student and connoisseur the peculiar brilliancy and freshness of Cox's work. Those drawings should be examined by holding them up on a level with the eye, and allowing the light to fall on them, and their surfaces will present the appearance of having been rubbed with glass-paper.

"There are two methods of preserving drawings—one is to bind them loosely in folio-books containing six, and no more, and in counter-sunk mounts like photographs in an album, which keep the surfaces from touching each other; or they must be hermetically sealed under glass and placed in frames out of sunlight and damp. If they were hung on the 'line' the spectator could leisurely study them, and the student might even copy them without their being moved at all. This can be proved from one's private collection. It is true, however, that at present the drawings are in counter-sunk mounts, but, strangely enough, the counter-sinking is only in the shape of a trench which is cut round the pictures, and which makes them appear to stand out, and causes them to be scraped and scarified to the utmost. If some ingenious and designing mind had planned a method

## James Orrock

of destruction more certain and rapid than any other, this, I should say, would be the one.

"Those who knew these Cox drawings in their fresh and pure state while they were in Mr. Henderson's possession must be shocked at their present condition. The attendant proved this by stating that 'they had faded since he first knew them.' They have not faded, however, but have been deadened and dulled by constant friction."

Sir James D. Linton, President of the Institute of Painters in Water-Colours, had his attention immediately drawn to Mr. Orrock's letter. In consequence he visited the British Museum, and then wrote to the *Times* as follows:—

"Lovers of the English water-colour art must have read with deep interest Mr. Orrock's letter about the state of the Henderson Coxes in the British Museum, which appeared in your issue of the 30th of March. I was unaware until I saw Mr. Orrock's letter that he had been examining the drawings. To-day I went with him to the British Museum, and I find that his statement is perfectly true. We were informed, however, at the Museum that the damage was done when they were so constantly handled by visitors shortly after Mr. Henderson's death. The evil, however, still continues, and the chief cause is the ineffective way in which the drawings are mounted. We also inspected the Henderson Müller drawings, and we were thankful to find that they had not suffered like the Coxes. There are two reasons for this, first, because they were less popular, and therefore not so frequently asked for; secondly, because they were painted for the most part on absorbent paper, without a granular surface, which, of course, has greatly saved them from the evil effects of friction. I contend that it is the duty of the Trustees of the British Museum, without delay, to place the whole of the drawings in deeper counter-sunk mounts close up to the drawings, and without a trench, such as they have at present. The pictures would then be quite protected by the shoulder of the mounts. In



*Portrait,*





## *James Orrock*

conclusion, I may say that we learnt to-day a valuable lesson, viz. that water-colour drawings are quite permanent when kept like the Müllers, and secondly, that friction, as in the case of the Coxes, is mistaken, even by their custodians, for fading. The proof is, the darker parts of the drawings, from friction, show the grain of the paper with the colour rubbed off, and in the delicate parts, where fading would first show itself, such as the sky and distance, they are as fresh as when they left the hand of the artist."

In opening his reply to the charges made separately and conjointly by Mr. Orrock and Sir James Linton, Mr. Sidney Colvin, the Keeper of the Print Room at the British Museum, regretted that the visits of the censors had been paid at a time when illness prevented his being there to receive them. "Otherwise" (he proceeds) "I could have saved them, and perhaps your readers, some needless alarm," &c. The obvious question arises, How could Mr. Colvin have saved a damage that already existed? However, he comes to close quarters with the direct declaration that

"Mr. Orrock states what is simply not the fact when he says that the drawings are 'exposed to friction' every time they are shown to students, by being, 'as it were, thrown down' on one another, so that the corners of the mounts scrape on the surface of the work. On the contrary, according to a regulation which is strictly enforced, they are carefully and gently laid down upon one another in such a manner as to guard against the possibility of such accident. With reference to the method of mounting, it is that which long experience has proved to be the best and only efficient one for the protection whether of prints or drawings in public collections, and which, first applied to the choicest portions of the treasures at Bloomsbury, has been since adopted, in imitation of our system, by most of the chief museums of the Continent. By this method each print or drawing is protected by being placed separately on a sunk mount, of which the front board or protecting margin is of considerably greater thickness than the print or drawing itself. The face of the work is thus kept clear from what is the great source of danger, viz. friction

## James Orrock

arising from contact with the back of the mount lying next above it in the case.

"The presence or absence of what these gentlemen picturesquely call a 'trench,' *i.e.* a narrow border (in our system three-eighths of an inch) between the edges of the drawing itself and the bevel of the surrounding mount, makes little or no practical difference to the degree of protection afforded. But that such protection should be efficient two conditions are, of course, essential—(1) that the front or protecting board should, as above set forth, be of sufficient thickness to preserve an interval between the face of the drawing and the back of the mount lying next above it; and (2) that the mounts should lie perfectly flat in their cases, since if they bend or 'buckle' up in any degree the required interval of course disappears, and friction over some part of the surface ensues. To secure this latter condition, extreme care is necessary in the manufacture and preparation of the mounting boards employed.

"This brings me to the circumstance which has furnished, unfortunately, a residuum of truth to the complaints of your correspondents. When the drawings of the Henderson bequest came first to the Museum (before the department was in my charge) it was sought to preserve the mounts on which they had been placed by Mr. Henderson himself, converting these into sunk mounts by throwing over the margin of each a new front or protecting board. The sunk mounts so formed, not being of uniform substance, did not long preserve their flatness in the artificially warm and dry atmosphere of the Museum; but some of them began to bulge upwards, causing exactly the kind of friction which it had been desired to avoid. The results are those which the vigilance of Mr. Orrock has just detected. They are infinitely less grave than his excited language would imply, but quite grave enough to be regrettable, especially in the case of certain drawings executed by Cox (as Sir James Linton says justly was his habit) on a paper of especially soft fabric and rough surface. But these results belong to a past and not to the present state of things. Finding what was

## James Orrock

the matter, I made it my immediate care to have the whole series, both of the Cox and Müller drawings, transferred to new sunk mounts of uniform and carefully-prepared substance. Since then I have kept, as in duty bound, a diligent watch upon them, and, in spite of their continual use by students, am confident that no further deterioration has ensued. At the same time, it is perfectly possible to add to the test of observation the test of actual experiment, devised to prove whether any degree of friction does or does not now take place. If any, even the slightest, can be shown still to occur, I agree with Sir James Linton that a new and thicker type of mounts, with protecting bevels of greater depth, must be used, the inconvenience of added weight and bulk being, of course, nothing as compared to the safety of the collections."

Mr. Orrock's rejoinder came first, for the reason assigned :—

"If Sir James Linton had been in England I feel sure he would agree with me in thanking Mr. Sidney Colvin for his reply to our letters, which appeared in the *Times*, on the present state of the Henderson Cox drawings in the British Museum. To my mind, Mr. Colvin has not distinguished himself in his defence against our statements. He admits that damage has been done to the Cox drawings, but that it 'belongs to a past and not to the present state of things.' He says, 'Finding what was the matter, I made it my immediate care to have the whole series, both of the Cox and Müller drawings, transferred to new sunk mounts of uniform and carefully-prepared substance.' I calmly, but emphatically, deny that those drawings are in what collectors and dealers know as sunk mounts; and after more than thirty years' experience one's knowledge, to say the least, ought to be considerable. They are placed on sunk mounts, but not in them. They are only surrounded by a trench which is between the mount and the drawing. In other words, they are virtually on the same plane as the mounts themselves, and therefore exposed at all points to friction from the handling of the other heavy mounted drawings. Mr. Colvin speaks of the buckling of the



## *James Orrock*

mounts which were placed over the drawings when they arrived at the Museum. I never saw the bulging and buckling of double mounts such as those must have been, but I have frequently seen the drawings themselves in that state from damp or, as he says, dry heat. Thick boards do not buckle so readily as thin paper. Costly drawings, as every tyro knows, ought to be put on a board over which a cut mount should be placed, so that the drawing would be seen through a window, as it were—like, in fact, the ‘rabbit’ of the frame of an oil picture. Mr. Colvin informs us, for some unknown reason, that the Calvert drawings, however, have deep and bevelled mounts. Why on earth did he not give the Henderson drawings the same advantage? Will Mr. Colvin kindly explain why, under his own system, glazed streaks like miniature wheel marks, caused, of course, by heavy mounts having been pushed against them, are clearly seen on his mounts and continued over the surface of the drawings? Those marks or scratches could not have been made before the Colvin mount had been introduced; then, where is their safety against friction? Cox’s signatures, too, and even the Museum stamp itself, have been glazed and almost obliterated from friction—and in the corners of the drawings, which are always protected by the shoulder of a genuine cut mount. Those corners by Mr. Colvin’s system are more exposed than any other part, which shows that his so-called cut mount affords no protection at all. It seems incredible to me that those evils should have occurred during the short space of time between Mr. Henderson’s bequest and Mr. Colvin’s appointment to the ‘department.’ The injuries, however, to say the least, have been rapid, and unless the Colvin mount be abandoned and the deep bevelled one adopted, the disease, from friction, beginning as it assuredly has at the corners and edges, will speedily reach the heart, and ultimately destroy the drawing altogether.

“Mr. Henderson’s gift to the nation included those Coxes at the Museum, and they were considered to form the most



## James Orrock

perfect collection of Cox drawings in existence. It was my privilege, from time to time, to study and enjoy them, and although they have, as even Mr. Colvin himself allows, suffered much since they went to the Museum, one is anxious to arrest the evil as quickly and effectually as possible.

"We recognise with our usual good nature how playfully Mr. Colvin flavours his statements with a pinch of invective. He treats Sir James and me to the following: 'Sir James Linton and Mr. Orrock show more zeal than information,' and he adds, 'The responsible officers do not require the aid of such great authorities as they for the elementary purpose of distinguishing between the effects of friction and effects of fading.' It may, however, be possible that the people, who own those valuable drawings, might care to have the aid of 'such great authorities,' especially when their object is to save their priceless treasures. These seams of satire, Mr. Colvin might remember, are administered to those whose lives have been spent amongst the choicest drawings of our English masters, and who, moreover, have practised as water-colour artists themselves, and who *manfully* feel that had such aid as he rejects been at hand the Henderson drawings would have been saved."

It is noteworthy that Mr. Orrock stuck to his picturesque "trench," while taking no exception on a point of literary style to Mr. Colvin's "buckle." At this juncture other controversialists entered the field. Mr. Louis Fagan "corroborated Mr. Colvin's statement respecting the temporary mounting of the Henderson collection," having been "charged at the time of the bequest with the preparation of a list of the water-colours in question." The gist of Mr. Fagan's letter is embodied in the following statements: "Mr. Reid, then keeper of the department, took the immediate precaution of throwing a raised mount over each drawing, in order to prevent the friction now alluded to. For many years these drawings were, I may say, daily copied and recopied; they were, however, placed in specially constructed

## *James Orrock*

frames, having a glass and also fitted with lock and key. The use of the Solander cases, to any one experienced in the working of a public institution, is undeniably the one method of storing valuable drawings and prints, a system adopted by all museums, not only in Europe but also in America. No careless treatment was or is possible, always considering that these works are intended for the use of the public, and are, therefore, exposed to a certain amount of wear and tear." He was, however, on other ground, and embarking upon a different kind of warfare, with a fully equipped antagonist ready, when he felt impelled to opine that "had the water-colours been framed and permanently exhibited, as now and then suggested, they would certainly not have retained their present freshness of colouring. Let it be remembered that it is a very different thing to deal with a vast national collection, at the beck and call of the public, as compared with a private one even of some magnitude."

Concurrently, another artist and expert, in the person of Mr. E. M. Wimperis, Vice-President of the Institute of Painters in Water-Colours, testified to the impaired condition of the Henderson Coxes. Writes Mr. Wimperis: "As the result of my examination, I can confirm all that Sir J. D. Linton and Mr. Orrock have said: 'There is scarcely a drawing which does not show very evident signs of abrasion and other damage.' Mr. Colvin contends that these injuries, which are undisputed, occurred before they were re-mounted as he describes. But if this be the case, how is it that the marks across the surface of the drawings are continued over the surface of the new mount also?" Mr. Wimperis then gives two instances, namely, the "Carnarvon" and "The Windmill," the latter a well-known drawing, and points out that "this is a 'test of observation' which may convince Mr. Colvin that there is no need for 'the test of experiment' to show that, even in their present carefully-tended state, the drawings suffer." Mr. Wimperis widens the application of his protest, and simultaneously sounds "the missionary note" with regard to a complete collection of

## James Orrock

examples of English Water-Colour Art that Mr. Orrock has been striking all his life, in these weighty words: "Drawings of so superb a quality as many of these are, should be placed under glass, hermetically sealed, and shown in frames where they could be studied and copied without being moved. If there is any difficulty in doing this at the British Museum, why should not the Cox drawings follow the De Wints in the same Henderson collection? The De Wints have already been removed from the cellars of the National Gallery to South Kensington. It would be a great step towards that 'consummation devoutly to be wished' of having a complete collection of English water-colour drawings under one roof, if these drawings could also be transferred to the same place."

Spectators of the pacific engagement in the columns of the *Times*, who had previously seen Mr. Orrock armed with a pen, were fully prepared for his counter-attack. Mr. Louis Fagan, at least, might have anticipated the onslaught. "As far as water-colour drawings go"—and they go a very long way with Mr. Orrock, their life-long champion—it was, as he declared, "a matter of great moment" to reply with characteristically defiant vigour to his two adversaries. The occasion had arisen, not (as will have been gathered already from this work) for the first time in the course of his militant career, for "all" to "go in," as it did with General Sheridan in his great battle. Mr. Orrock, again in arms for the cause, struck out in the well-remembered fashion with: "The aim or tendency of Messrs. Colvin and Fagan seems to be to use their authority for condemning water-colour drawings as a most perishable branch of fine art. I calmly and firmly, from long experience, denounce their statements as false, and I will make good my position. This unkindest cut of all is administered to conceal the maltreatment of those beautiful Coxes which the late Mr. Henderson so generously placed in their hands as custodians for the people. Mr. Fagan in his letter, April 6, states that he 'was charged at the time of the bequest with the preparation of a list

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of the Henderson drawings,' and that he 'took the precaution of throwing a raised mount over each drawing in order to prevent the friction now alluded to.' May I ask Mr. Fagan why those protective mounts were exchanged for the Colvin mounts? He admits that 'for the use of the public,' which means the handling of the drawings, 'they are exposed to a certain amount of tear and wear.' I ask, Were not the Henderson De Wints and Cattermoles, till lately in the National Gallery, but now at the South Kensington Museum, also bequeathed to the nation by Mr. Henderson with the British Museum drawings? They were studied and copied at the National Gallery, which I can prove, but never handled by the public as they are at the British Museum. At Trafalgar Square they were always under glass and in frames, as they now are at the South Kensington Museum. There they shine out and bear witness against the treatment of their fellows in Bloomsbury. They are, in fact, beautiful, and as fresh as when they came from Mr. Henderson's portfolios. Mr. Fagan makes a bold but incautious statement, which, if not false, might be serious. He says, 'Had they been framed and permanently exhibited, they would certainly not have retained their present freshness of colouring.' This is the complaint we make, that under the British Museum treatment those drawings have become dull and dead from rubbing and scarifying by being handled by the public. I can refute Mr. Fagan's reckless statement by showing him, in my own private collection, drawings which have been framed and exposed to light for many years, in some instances for more than thirty years, drawings which are as fresh and bright as they were in the days when Mr. Henderson used to compare notes with mine. The Henderson drawings would hardly be compared with mine now.

"The mischief at the Museum has been done within little more than ten or twelve years. It is unthinking, and idle also, of Mr. Fagan to say that 'a vast national collection at the beck and call of the public is a different thing as compared with a private collection.' Were the National Gallery Henderson drawings not as



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much at the 'beck and call of the public' as those at the British Museum? There was, however, a wide difference between the modes of exhibiting them. At Bloomsbury the people handled as well as saw them, and therefore friction and dust came in. At Trafalgar Square they also showed them, but the public were not allowed to touch. After, if I may be allowed to say, a long experience in watching and preserving English water-colours, I well know the damage which comes to them from thumbing and fingering. Mr. Fagan assures us that foreign museums copy our system of keeping prints and drawings. It is to be hoped they do not include water-colours. Prints and some fast-set drawings may be none the worse from digital treatment, but certainly water-colours are. How can Mr. Fagan judge how English water-colour drawings are treated in foreign museums, seeing there are none there? We know, in fact, that the light of our first-class drawings has not yet reached them. Mr. Fagan talks with apparent authority of the fading of water-colours when framed and hung in the light; could he persuade us that a pack of cards, for instance, which is subject to thumbing and shuffling, could be in the virgin state of one which is carefully kept and arranged under glass? One would imagine that in time the digital practice of the operators would affect even the resplendent dresses of the card courtiers, and make them sad and dowdy. This represents the case in excess between handled drawings and framed ones. Lastly, why are not the people allowed to finger those magnificent Damascus and Persian bottles and dishes which Mr. Henderson left also to the Museum? Because there would be risk of accidents. This has happened, I repeat, to the Coxes. Let those gems, even at this late hour, be framed, and, as Mr. Wimperis said in his letter, sent to join their old companions at South Kensington, where they can be studied and copied, and there will be no more complaints, but congratulations."

In another letter which Sir James D. Linton contributed to the controversy, he added confirmatory facts and arguments to

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those already submitted by Mr. Orrock and Mr. Wimperis, and at the same time took occasion to gently rebuke Mr. Colvin, who "very discourteously, not to say untruly, states that Mr. Orrock and myself have shown more zeal than information. Speaking for myself, and I am sure I may do so also for Mr. Orrock, the condition of the drawings and the present mounts is our justification, and we can fairly claim to have as much, if not more, experience in the water-colour department of art than even Mr. Sidney Colvin himself. Let it not for one moment be supposed that I am accusing Mr. Colvin of culpable negligence, for I am certain that he has all the zeal and enthusiasm of a public official, but it is a negligence rather due to a want of practical knowledge than to any want of dilettante appreciation of the works themselves."

There had meantime been an interposition on the part of Mr. Girtin on behalf of what, without any desire to be flippant or discourteous, may be called the cause of the Sidney-Colvinites. Sir James, in passing reference to that gentleman, said, "Mr. Girtin, unfortunately for him, asks the public 'to compare the condition of the water-colour drawings at the British Museum with those at South Kensington.' By such a comparison the public will find that the De Wint drawings, which were bequeathed at the same time as the Coxes to the nation, are as brilliant and pure as when they were painted. But the most remarkable statement that Mr. Girtin makes is a complaint that 'the authorities have divested them of their white mounts and substituted cumbrous gilt frames,' thereby 'destroying all effect of space and transparency,' whereas every tyro knows that exactly the opposite effect is produced. Would Mr. Girtin be surprised to hear that numbers of these 'cumbrous gilt frames,' as he calls them, are the identical frames which surrounded the drawings when they were purchased out of the 'Old Society' by the original purchasers? They are, in fact, Ford and Dickenson's pattern frames, which for uniformity were used by the grand old English water-colour masters in days gone by at the 'Old Society.' Mr. Girtin,

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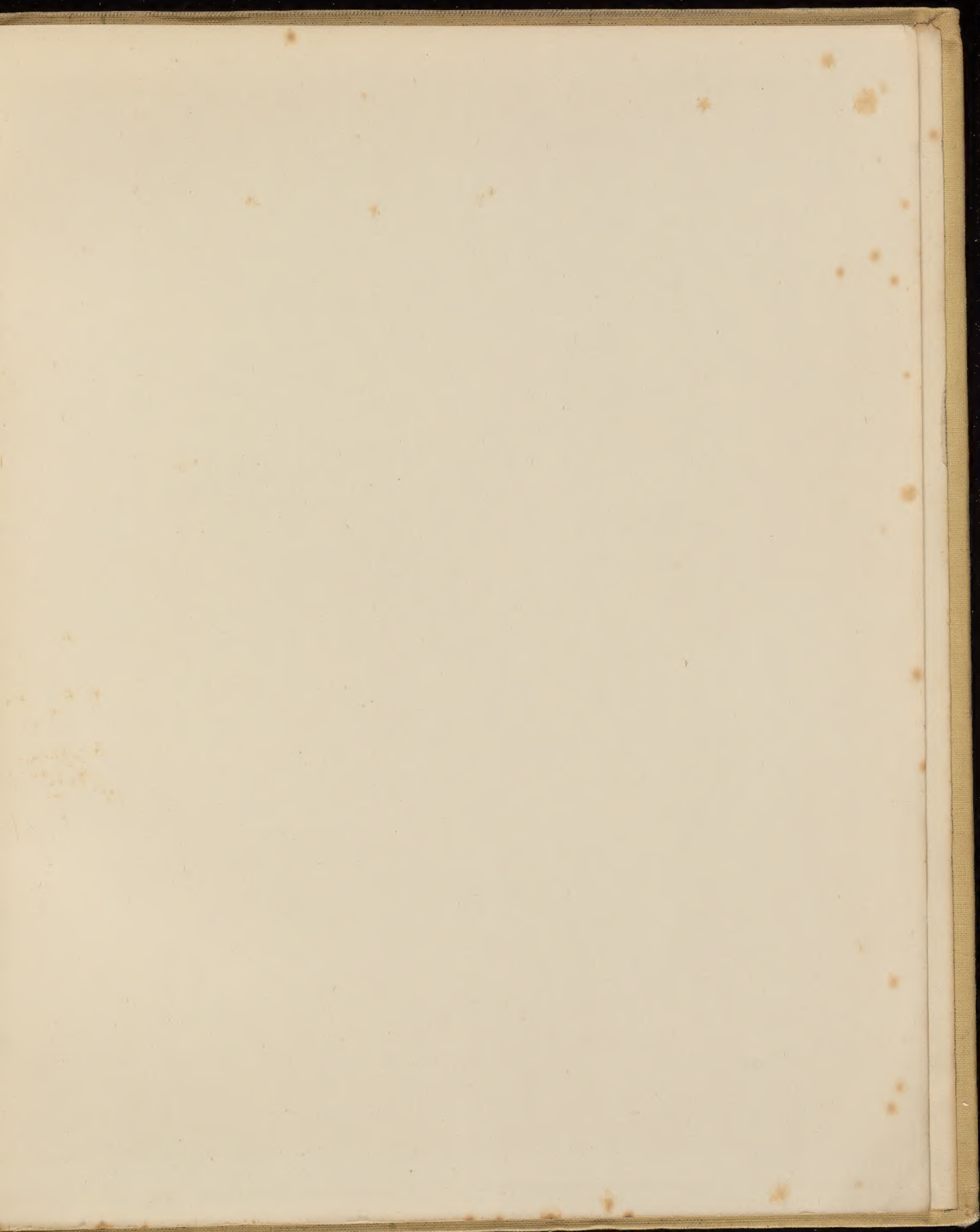
therefore, can hardly expect to have his opinions placed on a level with that of the greatest of all the English masters in water-colour art."

Mr. Louis Fagan wrote another letter, of little or no moment, and not very pertinent to any of the questions raised. There was also a note of thanks to "Mr. Orrock, Sir James Linton, and Mr. Wimperis for drawing public attention to their present condition from rough handling," of the Henderson drawings, from Mr. George B. Henderson, the nephew of Mr. John Henderson, the giver of the collection to the nation. In a leading article on the subject of the controversy the *Times* shows its appreciation of its importance. Mr. Orrock and the cause of Water-Colour Art had to be felicitated on inspiring the principal journal in the world with such wholesome sentiments as these:—"Now that we have at length housed our national portraits, thanks to private munificence, it may be allowable to hope that some similar building may in process of time be provided for a national water-colour gallery, where pictures of this kind may be exhibited under the special conditions favourable to their preservation. Water-colour, indeed, is more truly national than any other of our fine arts."

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